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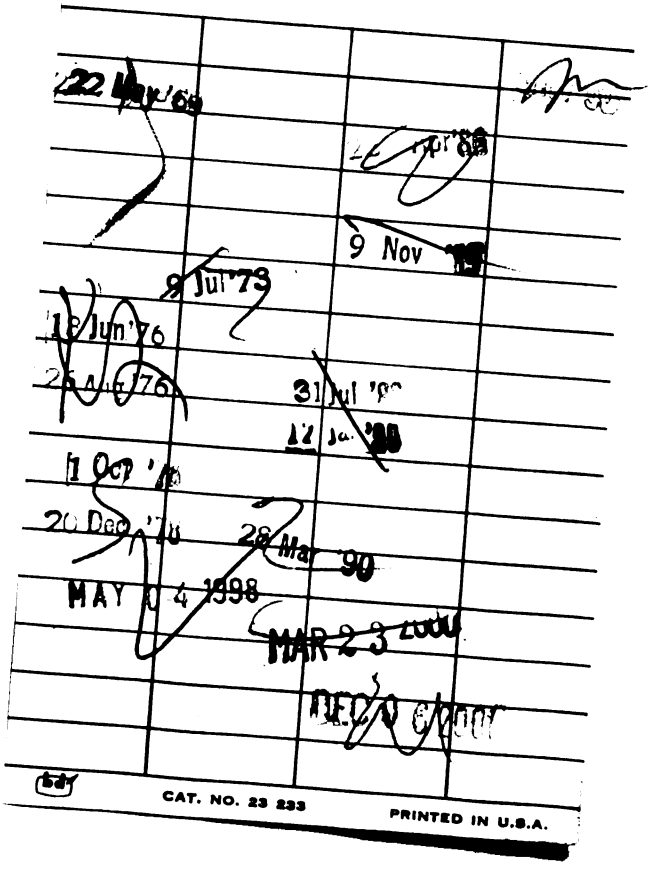
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PATRON SAINTS

FIRST SERIES

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PATRON SAINTS.

BY

ELIZA ALLEN STARR.

Golden vials full of odours which
are the prayers of the saints.
APOCALYPSE V. 8.

CHICAGO
ELIZA ALLEN STARR
299 HURON STREET
1896

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DEDICATION.

TO

THE FAITHFUL

YOUTH

OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN

AMERICA,

TO WHOSE INTERESTS I AM PROUD TO DEVOTE MY LIFE,
THESE SKETCHES OF THEIR

PATRON SAINTS

Are Affectionately Dedicated.

St. Joseph's Cottage, Chicago.
FEAST OF ALL SAINTS, MDCCCLXIX.

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INTRODUCTION.

FATHER R———, under the influence of whose æsthetic yet thoroughly practical mind these sketches of Patron Saints have, from time to time, been written, always insists that "Children's books are not, necessarily, childish." I have applied this rule to the matter, as well as to the style, of these sketches; for I have found that children can understand books which they cannot read for themselves. At my elbow, as I write, stands a lively example of this well-known fact. Master Bertie, who has reached his eighth year, will lie on the floor, or perch himself on a chair in a position utterly unattainable by any one but a rope-dancer or a child with bones as lithe as willow-rods, and listen by the hour to "Sister Nellie," only two years older than himself, while she reads Hawthorne's "Wonder Book for Children," or Ruskin's "King of the Golden River," "written," as he tells us, "for a very young lady."

Any child, intelligent enough to listen with pleasure to a well written fairy tale, is capable of understanding, and appreciating, the story of nearly every

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saint whose name appears in the Calendar; and if boys and girls do not enjoy reading the Lives of the Saints as generally written, it is because they do not readily take in a closely printed page of condensed facts. The same facts, dilated upon with even ordinary enthusiasm, such as one hears in conversation, would seize upon their imagination, and interest their affections.

It is one of the misfortunes of abridged histories for children, that they give the dry facts, without any of those pleasing digressions that sustain the interest of the adult reader in the perusal of the original work. It is like feeding on condensed meats, which, however nutritious, fail to give the relish of the usual dishes of beef and mutton.

There is a singular forgetfulness, also, of another fact, very noticeable among children, and this is, the readiness with which they grasp the wonderful in nature and the miraculous in the history of humanity. Robinson Crusoe and the Arabian Nights will never lose their hold upon the young of any generation; and for this reason—they recognize the power of the youthful imagination and trust themselves to the sympathies of their young readers. The early Christians did not attempt to gratify this love of the marvellous, and this capacity for sympathizing with the most extraordinary relations, by putting before their children fictitious narratives; but they did what was far more direct, and far more effectual—they gave them the Acts of the Martyrs, and the sublime history of Christianity in the midst of persecution. They did not fill their libraries with exciting stories of lion-hunts or adventures with elephants, and tigers, in the jungles of India, but they told them the story of a St. Pancratius, inviting the leopard to open to him the gates of the martyr's heaven; of a St. Agnes, playfully dropping over her childish

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hands the manacles ordered for her by the harsh Roman Prefect; of a St. Dorothea, smilingly promising to her pagan lover, turned accuser, fresh apples from Paradise, as she was on her way to execution; and, however worldly wisdom or pagan learning or cynical philosophy may sneer at these beautiful traditions, a guileless child has never yet been known to smile with incredulity, or to carp with cautiously worded phrases at these miraculous Acts of the darlings of Christian literature. Put the lives of the saints into the language of colloquial narrative; let them appeal to the ready sympathies, the noble sensibility to the highest code of honor, of the children of to-day; connect them with the sports and the studies, the trials and the temptations of the child, living at this moment in America, in the United States; and the saint will prove a dangerous rival to the fairy, and the true Acts of the Martyrs will triumph over the juvenile fictions that now prepare the mind of the youngest reader to crave only the high-seasoned, sensational novel. Protestantism may indeed pause before admitting the Lives of the early Christian Martyrs, or the thrilling narrative of many a Catholic priest or courageous nun among the barbarians of all nations and of all climes, into their Sunday School libraries; but Catholicity recognizes these narratives as the natural and appropriate literature of the Christian child as well as of the Christian adult; and, by so doing, shows the rare quality of her maternal instinct, and gives a sublime testimony to her confidence in the intellectual vigor and spiritual discernment of even "babes in Christ."

To one who stands only on the threshold of Catholic literature how precious and how varied do its treasures appear; how inviting the safe and duly guarded paths of learning; how ennobling the types

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of virtue presented to the admiration of the "children of light!" But if this is the experience of those standing only upon the threshold, how grand are the spectacles, how ravishing the vistas, opening to the eyes of the really ardent student and the profound scholar! Those who blame Catholics for "confining themselves to their own literature," know little of the celestial spaces open to their intellectual telescope.

And shall we, who have entered upon this inheritance, consent to forget the supernatural traditions of the heroic ages of faith, and, mingling in the tide of naturalism setting off from these sublime shores, seek our recreation only at the common level of mortal interests? Shall we, moreover, condemn our youth and little children to find their entertainment in the fictitious narratives of the day, instead of presenting to their enthusiastic admiration the inspiring examples of real personages and genuine heroes; or, presenting to them these glorious types of Christianity, shall we do so after the dry and concise manner of Gazetteers and books of dates? Or shall we dilate upon the attractive points of our narrative, and show, as we can now so well do, how the saints have been the true civilizers and teachers of the world, the true men of letters, of science, and of wisdom, as well as the inspiration of true genius in all Christian ages? It is by showing to children, the inquisitive boys and the impressible girls, how the saints have been the practical working men, as well as the crowning glory of their age, that we are to rouse within them a sincere veneration for the Saints of God; a veneration too deep for the finger of a malignant scepticism to blight, too lofty for the poisoned arrow of a paganized philosophy to wound. Let us not trust, in this age of extraordinary dangers, to ordinary means of safety. Let us not be contented with the mere learning "by rote," and by "reason of cus-

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tom," the history of the Church and of her saints; but, with the first dawn of understanding, let the vision of Christian virgins, of spotless confessors, of triumphant martyrs, take possession of the infant imagination; and thus shall that "sweet hour of prime," which comes to the young of all nations, find them consecrated to the loftiest ideals of human excellence, and, it may be, of supernatural sanctity.

But the principle upon which I have based the choice of subjects for this volume of Patron Saints, is no less true when applied to Art than to Literature. It is not because the children around us are incapable of appreciating the great works of religious art, that they are not made familiar with them. The real truth of the matter is, that children comprehend these sublime productions much better than they do those of an inferior or less exalted order. Set before any intelligent child, instructed in the dogmas of the Christian religion, a tolerable representation of the two most renowned pictures of "The Last Judgment," the one by Andrea Orgagna on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa, and that by Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, and we shall find the sympathies of the child sustaining the preference given, by the most accomplished critics of art, in favor of Andrea Orgagna. Again: let any innocent child, of ordinary sensibility, be familiar with the angels painted by that holy monk, Fra Angelico of Fiesoli; and then put before him the flippant, erratic beings fluttering about the sacred personages in many a picture called religious, and the profound instinct of the child will be on the side of the Angelical Brother. There is no child who does not hang enraptured over Correggio's "Nativity," "*La Notte*," of the Dresden gallery; and although it may not understand the enthusiastic praises of Frederic von Schlegel over this wonder of religious art, the

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silent joy of the child is one and the same with that which prompted the eulogium of the great German critic.

It is not, then, because children are incapable of appreciating these works of art, in the noblest sense of appreciation, that they are not made acquainted with them; but rather because of the indifference to the highest excellence of such works in the minds of those who are responsible for the mental and spiritual culture of the young. It is not the child, who is indifferent, but the parent; and very much of this indifference is the result of circumstances, until a vitiated taste unfits a generation to appreciate what, under other circumstances, would excite the most delightful enthusiasm. We have all heard of children, removed very early from their parents and country, who have lost the knowledge of their mother tongue, and although they may regain it more easily than others may acquire it, for them it is, practically, a foreign language. This seems to apply in a special manner to ideas of religious art, and the appreciation of its most exalted types, among Catholics cut off from communication with the sources of true criticism, and separated, also, from those traditions that keep alive the feeling for true religious art. In this country, until photographs multiplied in the cheapest form the works of the great masters, by far the greater number of our American people had really no opportunity of forming any correct judgment in regard to religious art; and now, unfortunately, too many sentimental and utterly spurious conceptions have been palmed off upon the Catholic child to allow him to think or feel with the candid accuracy of first impressions. Many a child, who, if its tastes had never been injured by exaggerated or puerile representations of sacred subjects, would have evinced a taste creditable to the

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most æsthetic culture, now turns from the celestial grace of a Fra Angelico, or a Perugino, or a Lionardo da Vinci, or even of a Raphael, to the sentimental, untheological, bedizened caricatures of religious emotion to be found on every side. It devolves upon those of the present day, who have in their hands the forming of the popular taste, to restore the ancient traditions, and to encourage such representations as shall aid, and not hinder, a clear understanding of the dogmas of the Christian faith.

In France, such men as Count Montalembert and M. Rio have pleaded the cause of the purest types of religious art against the corruptions of popular taste; and it is, certainly, not derogating from us as a nation, at such a distance from the centres of Christian traditions, if some words of entreaty are offered in behalf of the highest types of religious art as found in the choice collections of Europe, and brought to our shores, against the degenerate types and unwitting innovations that prevail among us.

To sincere persons who may attach only a secondary importance to the purity of artistic types in religious art, it will throw a new light on this subject to quote the opinions expressed, ages ago, by those who held themselves responsible, before God and the Church, for everything connected with the Divine worship and Christian civilization.

If we go back to the ages when Christianity was still an underground religion, compelled to practice its sacred rites amid the gloom of the Catacombs, we shall learn what were the types of sacred art sanctioned by those standing within the halo of the first Christian traditions; and it is to be remarked, that in these subterranean chapels, occupied by a generation whose blood was called for as the seed of the future Church, we find all solemn, indeed, but ineffably serene; with

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an air of tender simplicity and even supernatural buoyancy, expressing beatitude rather than happiness, and full of the celestial triumph of the heavenly Jerusalem. The head of our Lord, found on the ceiling of the fourth chamber of the Catacombs of St. Calixtus on the Via Appia, beneath the Church of St. Sebastian, could not be misunderstood, wherever found, and is worthy of being considered the prototype of those heads of the Redeemer still to be seen in the most perfect examples of Christian art.

But as time went on it became customary for even such teachers as St. Cyril, to dwell upon the humiliations of our Lord as foretold by the Prophet, who describes Him as "An abject among the people, a worm and no man," until the popular taste declared that He should be represented, in works of art, as without comeliness; and during His passion as hideous by reason of His anguish. Happily for the safety of doctrine as well as the truth of art, this view was combated by the three Latin Fathers, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Jerome, and, in the East, by St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory of Nyssa, all living so early as the fourth and fifth centuries. When the question was revived in the eighth century, St. John of Damascus, and Pope Adrian I., so far from countenancing, or even treating with indifference, this innovation upon the traditions of sacred art, boldly declared the Redeemer, "A new Adam, and a model of perfection in form;" while no less in the twelfth century, when the meagre type of the Byzantine artists was in a measure thrust upon Christendom, the voice of St. Bernard was raised in defence of the original pictorial traditions of Christianity.*

Nor will this surprise us, when we remember the

*See M. Rio's De l'Art Chrétien. Page 9.

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place occupied by the artist in the eyes of the Church. St. Bede, writing in the eighth century, describing the pictures brought by St. Bennet Biscop for the decoration of his twin churches, St. Peter and St. Paul, says, "Those, therefore, who knew not how to read, entering these churches, found on all sides agreeable and instructive objects, representing Christ and His saints, and recalling to their memory the grace of His incarnation and the terrors of the last judgment." The Synod of Arras, held in 1205, declared, that "Painting is the book of the ignorant, who know not how to read in any other." And an inscription, formerly legible, over the principal doorway of St. Nixier at Troyes, expresses the desire of its pastor to familiarize the faithful with the facts and dogmas of religion; "for which reason," he says, "I have caused to be painted three windows, to serve as a catechism of instruction to the people."

It was not, then, merely as a decorative art that painting was encouraged, or so carefully defended from any essential variations; but as a powerful appeal to the will and the understanding of the Christian world, through the sense of sight; and, as such, to be encouraged and guarded. According to the spirit which then belonged to art, or rather vivified art, as the soul gives life to the body, there was not a dogma of the faith "committed to the saints," not an incident, either in the Old Testament or the New, bearing in any way upon these greatly venerated and beloved dogmas, that was neglected by the pious artists of those ages of faith; and as the literature of those ages was made up, in great part, of works on Theology, or of works bearing upon the eternal interests of man, so the pictures that glorified those ages, as they are found in the churches, in the ancient chapels of devotion, especially at Assisi, on the walls of the Campo Santo, and, later still, on

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the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, may be called grand compendiums of the history of the world from Adam to the Christian Era, through the childhood, ministry, death, and glorified life of our Redeemer, the establishment of the Apostolic Church and its miraculous growth, to those events marking the spiritual rank of the generations by which they were executed; and then, winging an eagle flight beyond time, and sense, and things known to the mind of man by experience, the forecasting imagination of the artist depicted the sublime issues of the final judgment and the beatitude of the elect. The pictures of these ages, of which we are speaking, might be treated, collectively, as pictures of devotion, and had their places, as all perceive, very suitably, in those sacred edifices created for the most sublime necessities of the human soul. It belonged to a later period, when the admixture of worldly learning and the exactions of wealth and luxury in the Christian world had turned art aside from its supernatural end, checked the celestial flight of its sanctified aspirations, and claimed for mortal interests a share, at least, in what had been, hitherto, dedicated to eternity, to draw distinctions, only too well deserved, between the sacred historical picture even and the devotional. It is now the task of all writers upon religious art to draw, clearly and delicately, the dividing line, and to judge of sacred pictures, not so much by the personages delineated in them, as by the motive animating these pictures as conceptions. There is a naturalistic school in sacred art, as well as in Theology, which seeks to bring within the range of natural motives, and natural conditions, the most supernatural incidents of the Old and New Revelation; and there is also an historical sacred art, as different from the most exalted conceptions of devotional art as the historical books of the Old Testament are different from the Psalms, the Can-

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ticle of Canticles, or the transcendent Revelation of St. John of Patmos.

We might take, as an example, the Crucifixion, that sublime scene which the devout imagination of every Christian has again and again depicted to itself, especially during the time of daily meditation. Nothing can exceed the intensity of dramatic action, the richness of costume of the Roman soldiery and the centurion on the one hand, and of the scribes and Pharisees on the other, introduced into many of the celebrated Crucifixions that are to be found, in every country, from the hands of the masters of art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They seemed to vie with each other in producing the sensible contrast between the pageantry of a blind, cruel, and unbelieving world and the abjection and sorrow of the Lamb of God. While looking at these pictures one almost hears the blasphemous taunt, and the merciless orders of the richly attired officials given in a tone of haughty dictation that overpowers the sigh of the devoted and afflicted Magdalene; while the waving of plumes, the glitter of lances, the dazzling array of military power, and the crush of eager and insulting multitudes, hardly leave room for the drooping figure of the Mother of Sorrows; or, if the Blessed Virgin is given any prominence, it is no longer as the example of fortitude in suffering—"standing," as the Evangelist expressly mentions, "by the cross;" but as a mother, overcome by the anguish of her son, and fainting in the arms of her friends. Without commenting on the theological inaccuracy of the last mentioned action of the Mother of God, we can say, that such pictures, although gorgeous, and powerfully attracting the admiration of every generation, must still be classed with the historical Crucifixions only; as not, in any sense, conforming to, or developing, the central idea of the sacrifice on

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Calvary; nor that transcendent excellence of our Divine Redeemer, that gave, even to the horrors of that deicidal scene, a pathetic beauty which the total eclipse of the sun itself could not wholly obscure.

This central idea of the bloody and actual sacrifice on Mount Calvary and this inextinguishable loveliness of the second Adam, together with His inseparable Divine nature, supplies that type, or devotional ideal, which occurs to the mind most readily during the morning hour of meditation. The historical type, especially under some mental conditions, might indeed occur to a person during this meditation, but it is not the one most conducive to those affections called the *fruit* of meditation. The historical type, save in some very exceptional instances, is the worldly, the exterior, the realistic, if not naturalistic, view of the mystery of Redemption and its closing scene. The devout Crucifixion is quite, quite different. In this there are no Roman guards close to the cross of the Man-God. Instead, we find the Mother of Dolors, standing with the fortitude possible only to the Mother of God, beside the cross of this victim of Love; opposite her is the Beloved Disciple; between them, and embracing the cross, is the holy penitent, St. Mary Magdalene, while the other holy women are sometimes seen in the distance. It is pre-eminently the sacrifice of Mount Calvary as repeated in the mass, that is represented in these truly sacred, truly devotional pictures. There is no torturing agony of position, no restless anguish, no movement; but the adorable Body hangs upon the three nails in the droop of unutterable, Divine patience, the arms nearly horizontal, the head bowed gently upon the breast that never heaved with a turbulent emotion. It is the suffering of a self-offered Holocaust; and the soul melts, like glass, before the tranquil ardors of this furnace of Omnipotent Love.

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Perfectly parallel instances of these different conceptions of the same event, are found in the "Descent from the Cross," and in the "Entombment." Take the Descent from the Cross by Rubens, in the Cathedral at Antwerp, and we have all the qualities that belong to the graphic, historical picture of sacred events, vividly and powerfully conceived. One fears, while looking at it, lest one of those busy hands may slip from the sacred body; and we sympathize with the involuntary action of the Blessed Virgin, who puts forth a hand, as if to take the place of the one that may fail.

But if we turn to the devotional rendering of this scene, how different are the emotions excited! In that most tender and expressive picture by Duccio, we see the maternal instinct of the Blessed Virgin, but in an action how pathetic! The venerated and beloved body is not yet wholly detached from the cross, for the faithful Nicodemus is carefully drawing the nails from the feet; but already, as the body is gently lowered from the sacred "tree," the maternal arms of the Blessed Virgin have received Him, and she presses on His lifeless lips the kiss of adoring love.

There is another picture of the "Descent from the Cross," by Fra Angelico, a description of which, in the "History of Our Lord," as begun by Mrs. Jameson and continued by Lady Eastlake, touches directly upon this point.

"No more Christian conception of the subject, and no more probable setting forth of the scene, can perhaps be attained. All is holy sorrow, calm and still; the figures move gently and speak in whispers. No one is too excited to help, or not to hinder. Joseph and Nicodemus, known by their glories, are highest in the scale of reverential beings who people the ladder, and make it look as if it lost itself, like Jacob's,

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in heaven. They each hold an arm close to the shoulder. Another disciple sustains the body as he sits on the ladder, a fourth receives it under the knees; and St. John, a figure of the highest beauty of expression, lifts his hands and offers his shoulder to the precious burden, where in another moment it will safely and tenderly repose. The figure itself is ineffably graceful with pathetic helplessness, but "Corona Gloriæ," victory over the old enemy, surrounds a head of Divine peace. * * * * In this picture it is as if the pious artist had sought first the kingdom of God, and all things, even in art, had been added unto him. * * * * Pious carefulness and earnest decorum here do even this hard work better than the most ostentatious display of anatomical knowledge and physical strength." Lady Eastlake has given in her drawing only the centre group, "leaving out," as she remarks, "the sorrowing women on the right, with the Mother piously kneeling with folded hands, as if in this attitude alone she could worthily take back that sacred form."

In the Deposition or Entombment, we find that only those masters who lose themselves and their art in the adoring love and sorrow that must have filled every heart in that little group of mourners, that procession of worshipful grief, have succeeded in touching the innermost spring of exquisitely tender feeling, to which this scene must ever appeal. Even Raphael, while producing, on this subject, a masterpiece of art, failed to express, or appeal to, the sentiment that would have made it a devotional picture in its highest sense; and the winding sheet tells us why. It is not held, as in deeply devotional pictures, at its full length, thus giving expression to the venerating awe that the lifeless humanity of the world's Redeemer must have inspired in the least of those privileged to bear it to the "new tomb" reserved for it, but the youthful energy

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and zealous action is suited rather to some incident in Mythology. It is not the recollection of Christians, who would esteem the too near contact with that adorable Body as sacrilege, that we see in this picture, but the vigor of youthful athletes bearing one of their own number to the tomb.

But if we turn from Raphael, in these pictures of the passion and death of our Redeemer, to those of a more contemplative school, we must still refer to his inspired genius some of the most exalted types of the Incarnation. The "Madonna del Sisto," or the "Dresden Madonna," as it is frequently called, marks the faith of Raphael in the most sublime dogmas concerning the Holy Infancy.* Much as the picture suffers in many engravings, it can never lose the supernatural majesty, the ineffable solemnity, that seals this sublime picture as consecrated, in its most secret motive, to the mysterious dogma of the Incarnation. What the *Et Homo factus est* (And was made man) must ever be in the music of the Creed, all devotional pictures of the Holy Infancy must be in the world of art. There can be no lightly tripping measure when the mysterious clause concerning the "Word made flesh" is treated either by voice or instrument; but the mystery sends the notes, far, far off into the eternal spaces, and the knees of the multitude bend simultaneously, like rushes before the wind. There may be charming pictures painted from some other motive; but no picture of the Holy Childhood that is not the offspring of meditation upon the Incarnation can ever meet the devout necessities of the Christian soul.

To let one's eye run over any collection of Raphael's Madonnas is to realize this distinction in the works of

*See account of the conversion of *Rumohr*. Épilogue a l'Art Chrétien, M. Rio. Vol. II, Page 112.

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this great artist, who has painted every shade of maternal feeling, from the admiring veneration mingled with tenderness that characterizes several of his most popular works, and makes them the delight of many a mother as she hangs over the crib of her infant, to the supernatural exaltation of the Dresden Madonna, in which is expressed all the mysterious sublimity of the event of the Incarnation, and the awful grandeur of "the woman clothed with the sun." The two angels at the foot of this group, standing, as it were, in some rift of mundane clouds, and giving us a glimpse of heaven and its glories, are not, as they are so often represented, chubby babies looking smilingly upon the baby above; but magnificent cherubs, with the superhuman knowledge of their angelic rank expressed in their adoring gaze upon the Mother of God and her Divine Son; their wings dipped in the colors of the rainbow, and their entire being rapt in the contemplation of that mystery from which springs the whole glorious panorama of Christian doctrine and of Christian art.

If any one, judging from the preference given in these pages to the "Mystical School of Art," should draw an inference in favor of pre-Raphaelite theories, as they are understood in this country, I would say that nothing could be further from my own intention. If I do not mistake the idea of the best expressions of the, so called, pre-Raphaelite movement, it is a return to those purely religious motives that inspired the noblest schools of Christian art, before pagan art had tainted the imagination of Christendom, and before mere human motives, or motives below the human as it exists under Christianity, were supposed to form proper subjects for the brush or chisel. Thus far, the pre-Raphaelite movement is on the side of truth, and of truth under its noblest aspects. But the moment art

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is spoken of in regard to a period of time, and not in regard to its spirit, the moment that artistic skill is despised, and meagre forms and childish perspective, and worse than childish ignorance, at this age of the world, are claimed to be the distinctive marks of religious art, that moment the movement becomes a retrograde one, and in no way to be tolerated. I have never supposed this extreme view of pre-Raphaelitism to be worthy of a moment's consideration; and the throwing upon the whole movement this puerile accusation, and combating it upon this ground, has always seemed to me a proof of superficial and altogether inadequate views of its real merits.

Let us suppose that Demetrius, the silversmith spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, had, instead of rejecting Christianity, received it by the mouth of St. Paul, and had used his craft, not to multiply statues of the "Diana of the Ephesians," for idolatrous worship, but of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Jesus, to satisfy the veneration of the faithful. We cannot suppose that he would, under such circumstances, reproduce his Diana with a few changes in the dress or position, and call it the Blessed Virgin; neither can we suppose that, having the skill of a cunning artificer, he would feel himself bound to forget this skill, and make only a rude, ugly image of the Mother of Christ and the Mother of Christians. It is only reasonable to suppose that he would bring to his conception of the Blessed Virgin, all the veneration of a true believer, and all the skill of the cunning workman. This case of Demetrius illustrates the true relation between devotional art and human learning. To insist upon robbing devotional art of the aids of human learning, is to return to a worse than Byzantine bondage; whereas the naturalistic freedom, of substituting human for Divine personages, has something worse than paganism in its

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errors; since it is a sin against knowledge that we have no authority for expecting will be "winked at."

While I am writing, the venerable Overbeck works, in his Roman studio, with a sanctified enthusiasm that places him at the head of living Christian artists. With the learning of all the glorious schools of more favored epochs at his hand, he uses this learning only as the means of securing the most perfect expression of religious ideas and emotions. Among the "Forty Illustrations of the Four Gospels," by this truly Christian master, is "The Visit of Jesus to Bethany"—to the house of Mary and Martha and the risen Lazarus. Our Lord is represented as just entering the door of this abode, so often and so singularly favored, and both Mary and Martha bow to the very ground before Him, while the benignant hand of this Omnipotent Friend and Guest is raised in blessing. This act of prostration is, evidently, not intended for the form of salutation common in the East; but it expresses, and is intended to express, the very same faith in the real presence of Jesus which animates every one who bows, or genuflects, before the altar on which He resides.

The works of Overbeck,* who is now more than eighty years of age, are full of consolation; proving, as they do, the possibility of a modern school of religious art. This possibility is founded upon the indestructible nature of the Church herself, to whom art is an auxiliary; and the history of the Church is very likely to be the history of art. The occasional errors and feebleness of religious pictures, both in early and later times, have sprung, not from an exhausted treasury, but from those imperfections incident to our mortal state; and her rejuvenations have come, not from those,

*The death of Overbeck was announced soon after this page was written.

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who, esteeming her dead or powerless, have sought to enthrone an art merely natural, in her stead, but from a vivifying of her own immortal powers, and a re-kindling of that religious fervor and simplicity of faith that inspired the pencil of Fra Angelico and his brother monks, Lionardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael and Correggio, in their most sublime compositions. Christian Art is the true Art, the one sublime Art, in all Christian ages; and the Church, so long as she is the Church, will not cease to fructify, to inspire, and to reform, if need be, the pictorial types of the Christian world.

I cannot refrain from describing a small Düsseldorf print in my possession, representing our Blessed Lady sitting at the foot of the cross from which her Divine Son has been taken, and contemplating the crown of thorns and the three nails beside her upon the ground. Between her and the city of Jerusalem in the back-ground, there is only a part of the upright length of the cross to be seen. She is quite alone. The mantle covers her head, rests on the bowed shoulders, on one of which shines a mystical star, and is then laid in ample folds over her knees. One hand touches her cheek, the other is raised slightly, with a sorrowful gesture, while the eyes rest, with an intense, meditative pain, upon the crown of thorns and the three gross nails. Nothing could be more simple or more direct than the motive of this picture; yet it is an epitome of the science and the practice of meditation. The most learned treatise upon meditation might fail to impart the one idea that is needed to teach the uninitiated the practice of this difficult devotional exercise; but what the most explicit instruction, by written or spoken word, might fail to impart, is here pictured forth to the comprehension of the most simple or the most ignorant. The wildest Indian careering over the plains

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and declivities of the Rocky Mountains, if a Catholic, could learn from this picture how to meditate; and the Carmelite nun, persevering in the strict silence and severe recollection enjoined by her rule, would prize the lesson given by the lay brother of the holy Order of St. Dominic, Fra Angelico of Fiesole.

Religious art is the blossom of religious dogma, and is its pictorial exponent. It is no more possible to have a religious art without dogmas, than to have a religious worship without faith. From this faith in a revealed dogma, will spring, with more or less perfection and vigor, every work bearing, in the most remote manner, upon religious events and emotions; and, not from the bare belief, but from the glowing, sanctified inspiration of devout affection, holy desire and adoring faith, have sprung, in every age, those conceptions of heavenly things that appeal to the sympathies of modern as well as of ancient Christendom.

Under the influence of this conviction, that the Art of the Church must be subject, like the Church herself in her exterior relation, to efflorescence and decadence, yet must remain ever the same in motive, ever appeal to the same interior sense of divine things, ever contain the germs of the same eternal dogmas, I have selected the illustrations for this volume, from the works of comparatively modern, as well as of ancient artists, and even from those of the present generation. But I need not go beyond the neighborhood in which I am writing for a proof of this. Over the altar of our church of the Immaculate Conception is a picture of the "Virgin Conceived without Sin," of a type so pure, so exalted, that it deserves to be named on these pages devoted to religious art. It was produced under circumstances that fully explain its extraordinary claims upon the devoted hearts of the faithful who kneel before it in the small church, that, when this picture

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was painted, stood on the edge of the prairie into which the city fades; and these circumstances exemplify the point upon which all modern religious art unquestionably turns.

The pastor of the Immaculate Conception had so far finished his church that the High Altar was to be erected; but where was the altar-piece to come from? It was then anything but a rich congregation, made up of families each owning its small lot and house, but neither, in general, fully paid for. For him that desires ardently enough, the mountains will move from their foundations; and who can set a bound to the desire of the Christian pastor for the religious decoration of his church? "Some truly pious picture," he said, "that should be painted from devotion and paid for from the treasury of Heaven." This was not a tempting offer to most artists; but among his congregation was one to whom this appeal had a special charm; and the only obstacle was a diffidence of his own powers. "It was one thing to paint for the world, quite another to paint for the Altar of God;" but this diffidence was overcome by the promise of such aids as only the Altar can procure. A Novena was begun, and on the last day Holy Communion was received with special devotion. The type chosen for this picture was the statue of the Immaculate Conception, modeled in Rome during the year in which the dogma was defined, and which not only received, in the studio of the artist, the verbal criticisms of the Holy Father, but the modeling stick was used by him to indicate a change in some folds of the drapery to secure its perfection. In this picture there is no studied pose of the figure. The white drapery falls to the feet, one of which is placed, with unaffected composure, upon the head of the serpent which it was promised she should crush. The blue mantle covers the

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head and drops serenely over the white robe. The head is not bent, but a certain modesty, an indefinable delicacy, inclines it without suffering it to droop; while the hands touch serenely at the tips of the fingers in an attitude of ineffable worship. It is not difficult to believe that when, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, this picture, begun as a work of devotion, continued and finished as such, appeared in its place over the High Altar, there were few whose hearts were not consumed with a more ardent devotion, and few eyes that did not moisten with more tranquil tears of holy confidence in the prayers of the Immaculate Mother of God. Time has only added to its mild splendors the charm of sacred associations, and I now turn from the Immaculate Conception of a Guido or a Murillo, to the calm beauty, the tender modesty, the absolutely virginal sanctity, of this picture over the altar of a church on the edge of our western prairies.

As it is my intention to dedicate these sketches of Patron Saints to the youth of the Catholic Church in America, I will dedicate this Introduction to the Catholic parents of these children. No interests can lie so near the hearts of good parents as those centering in the spiritual integrity of their offspring. They do not expect their children to become saints; very few indeed desire such perfection in their children, esteeming saintship as a pearl of too great price; but there is a certain staunch and positive adherence to the customs of faith, as well as to its dogmas, that no one could see dying out of Catholic generations without something deeper than a sigh. Many an "Old Country" Catholic, born among the traditions of Mother Church, near some "Holy Well," accustomed to hear of pilgrimages to favored shrines, reared within the shadow of some noble Abbey, whose ruins stand as silent witnesses to the faith of former generations, and where

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the All Hallow's Eve, and the Holiday of Obligation, are odorous with pious observance—many a Catholic of this favored sort comes to our country, tries the life, it may be, of a pioneer, or of some dweller in a district of scattered homesteads, where a mass is never, never said, excepting irregularly, in some farm house larger than the others, or miles away in some lonely chapel where the Blessed Sacrament never can remain for a single night; where there is no Sunday School, no instruction in Catechism, no confraternities, no special devotions; where Sundays and Holidays of Obligation are with difficulty distinguished from other days—or, if residing in a town or city, finding the Catholic Church insignificant in the sight of the community, if not actually despised; Catholic notions of morality ignored, Catholic devotions, processions, missions, novenas, miracles, treated as superstitious nonsense—under all these disadvantages he brings up a family of boys and girls, quick in perceptions, impressible in temperament, and then wonders, with a wonder full of painful anxiety, why these boys and girls, who are (thanks to the grace of God!), firm Catholics, are still not enthusiastic Catholics; wonders that they are so poor in sentiments of religious veneration, and lacking almost utterly, the charm of a tender piety in their daily actions—forgetting how these emotions, in himself, were fed by the very air he breathed in childhood, by the conversation, and even gossip, of the neighborhood in which he was born, and by all that routine of life under the conditions of faith, which grows up unconsciously, like a hedge, around a Catholic family in a Catholic country, village, or city. It is time, alone, that can supply many of the lost links of religious association in a country like America; but still, a great deal can be done by reflecting people to weld anew these associations out of the practices of Catholic faith.

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It is to supply some of the minor conditions of a happy Catholic community that I have endeavored to connect incidents related in the lives of the saints with the events of the present day; to take up some thread, by which it can be shown that to-day is of the same woof as yesterday in the loom of Divine grace; that in the generations of the Catholic Church epochs pass into each other, overlap each other, so that the devotions of one century descend to another, in such a manner as to prove that their changes are only developments of the same motive, of the same spiritual necessity.

There is no doubt that the lives of the saints thus conceived, are capable of an almost infinite development of interesting associations for the scholar, the poet and the artist, as well as for the Theologian and the Religious. No better proofs of this can be given than the St. Elizabeth of Hungary and St. Columba of Ireland, by Montalembert, and the short, but charming, Legend of Glastonbury, by Anderdon. In fact it is precisely to this development of the influence of a saint upon society and its ideals, that we are indebted for the religious art of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and even sixteenth centuries; and for the poetry of those ages, of which the "Divina Commedia" of Dante, and all those sublime hymns which make so large a part of the sacred office for the ecclesiastical year, are the living effloresence. Neither imagination nor devotion can feed upon the recital of bare facts, however sublime in themselves. That the saints may be to us what they were to the people of the "Ages of Faith," inspirations—inspirations to piety, to holy living and to devout genius—they must come to us surrounded by all the moving associations of their times and all the venerable and noble traditions which have gathered around them in succeeding times, like an atmosphere of glory.

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Whatever helps the Catholic parent to preserve Catholic traditions, Catholic customs, and a Catholic sentiment, in his family, will bring a blessing upon any house; and for this reason I beg of you Catholic fathers and Catholic mothers to keep on your walls such pictures, such representations of the Divine mysteries of the sacraments and of the saints, as will encourage a truly Christian spirit of devotion in your families. Let these pictures be such as will prove "catechisms of instruction" to the young, as well as incentives to devotion for the adult; and, insensibly, they will excite the desire in the minds of your children to know something of the traditions that inspired them; until, by one of those unexpected graces that succeed to years of prayer, the dormant dispositions of faith will be roused and their eyes will be quickened to perceive the celestial relations between man and his Maker, man and his Redeemer. Every hour of serious work in this direction tells upon the future. The time may not be far distant when America may be called the "Land of Saints;" and we may see companies of pious pilgrims to some shrine, or spot of extraordinary devotion, taking the place of those pleasure parties which now set no limit to their ambition save such as the oceans, on either side of this vast continent, may compel. Let us remember that the seed must be cast into the soil, or the sunshine and dew of God's mercies will be in vain; and, casting in the seed with a believing hand, we may trust to God to perfect His own glorious work for the future generations of faithful Catholics in America.

No claim for originality can be set up by any one writing about the saints. The ancient Acts of the Saints have been, and must be, the sources from which every one draws his narrative, directly or indirectly, concerning these heroes of the Church of God, and

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the true heroes of humanity. But however just it might be to refer my readers to the precise pages on which I have found these facts, there is a serious objection to cumbering juvenile pages with references. I will therefore state briefly, that, first, Rev. Alban Butler's invaluable "Lives of the Saints," is the work upon which I have principally relied; then, Dr. Lingard's "Antiquities of the Anglo Saxon Church;" Count Montalembert's "Monks of the West;" also, "Christian Schools and Scholars." For the pictorial additions to the book, I am largely indebted to the "Düsseldorf Series of Religious Prints;" and both as to the text and illustrations, to Mrs. Jameson's works upon Christian Art, and to Kuglers "Hand-book of Painting." The admirable writings of M. Rio have fallen into my possession too recently to enrich my pages, as I could wish, from his choice treasury. But in his "Poetry of Christian Art," as in "Vandalism and Christian Art," and "The Actual State of Religious Art in France," by Count Montalembert, I have found nothing but confirmation of the ideas advanced in this unpretending volume. The unrivaled works of those great men in Europe who, like Frederic Rumohr, A. F. Rio and Count Montalembert, have consecrated their ripe learning and exalted genius to the cause of æsthetic Christian art, so far from discouraging my efforts have rather stimulated them, by throwing a new and extraordinary light upon the path I have chosen. I trust that the time is very near when the Catholic children of America, as well as of France, of Germany and of Italy, will not be driven to books of, at least, doubtful Catholic tendencies for the key to their own treasures of devotional art, but will have free access to the knowledge they will more and more crave on this subject, without danger to faith or to piety.

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Following, then, with cheerful humility, in such august footsteps, I present my little book upon "Patron Saints" to the Catholic public of the United States, as a token of my gratitude for all the solace and the ever-increasing delight I have received from the study of Catholic Art, as well as from the sublime records of her canonized Saints, whose prayers have been my defence, whose friendship has been my consolation, and whose aid I hope to invoke in the hour of death.

ST. JOSEPH'S COTTAGE.

Vigil of All Saints, 1869.



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ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL.

IF you have ever so small a map of Palestine, or the Holy Land, look over it carefully until you find the Sea of Galilee, or, as it is otherwise called, Lake Genesareth and the Sea of Tiberias. If you have any pictures of the Holy Land, be sure to look those over also, and see if among them is not a view of this beautiful lake, set among the mountains of Judea, its shores studded with fair cities and towns, on its waters the frail barks of the Galilean fishermen, and on its beach the fishermen's nets spread out to dry. Still, it is not for the beauty of the lake nor of its shores, that I ask you to do this, but because upon this lake and upon its shores and within its towns, took place some of the most wonderful and important events in the life of our Lord. Among these important events were the several calls, given by Him to His service, of the rude fishermen of the neighborhood, and, foremost among these, was the choice of Simon, called Peter.

Let us turn to the simple account given by St.

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Matthew, in chapter iv, verse 18, of his gospel, of the calling of St. Peter.

"And Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And He saith to them: Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And immediately, leaving their nets, they followed Him."

Try to picture to yourselves the Redeemer of men as He walked on the pleasant shore of the Sea of Galilee, the blue sky of Asia above Him, before Him the waters of the lake and the little boat of the two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew; try to picture that face of Divine beauty, whose look, it would seem, no candid soul could resist; try to catch the tones of that voice whose invitations, so simple and so brief, drew the fisher from his nets, and the publican from his receipts of custom, and you will no longer wonder at anything but the hesitating of people, now-a-days, as to whether they will follow this same Jesus, or not.

To read the Four Gospels is to read the story of Jesus Christ and of His apostles, disciples and friends; and, especially of St. Peter, who had so large a place in all the scenes of the three years ministry of his Master. Peter was one of the three selected by Him to witness His transfiguration; he was, also, one of the three who went with our Lord to the Garden of Gethsemane, and he was one of those who *ran* to the sepulchre when he heard the first news of His resurrection. How little those who stood on the shore of

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the Sea of Galilee that morning—within hearing, it may be, of the voice of Jesus of Nazareth, and who saw the two brothers leave their nets and follow Him —how little any of those bystanders, and how little St. Peter, himself, realized to what he had been called! And, to this call of St. Peter, what a contrast is presented in the call, by the same Jesus of Nazareth, to Saul of Tarsus, from that time called Paul! The first, in the tranquil freshness of morning, or the pensive stillness of evening, on the breezy lake shore; the last, at noonday, on the burning sands of the road to Damascus, towards which Saul, attended by armed horsemen, was traveling with hot speed. To Peter, Jesus calls out with a voice of gracious invitation, "Follow me, and I will make you a fisher of men." To Saul of Tarsus that same voice speaks, in tones of awful reproach, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

I shall not attempt to give you so much as the bare facts of the lives of these great apostles, both, by the direct voice of Jesus Himself, called to His most sublime service, as you can refresh your memory of them by a careful reading of the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; but I shall begin this book, intended for your instruction and pleasure, by giving you some idea of them both in one sketch, since no list of Patron Saints would be complete without the names of these two grand pillars of the Church of Christ, St. Peter and St. Paul. We find their festivals making glad every season of the ecclesiastical year; and so closely are they united in the mind of the Church, that the

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Office read by every priest on the feast of one, always includes a commemoration of the other. The new year opens with the Feast of the See of Peter, or, as it is called, the "Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome;" and, a few days after, we celebrate the festival of "The Conversion of St. Paul."

On the pile of loose papers at my right hand lies a paper-weight, which you would notice on account of its elegance of form, the variety of colored marbles of which it is made, and, also, for a likeness of the Holy Father, Pius IX., very carefully cut out of the piece of pure white marble on the top. In the wooden box, in which this paper-weight was brought from Rome, and in which it is, still, often placed for safety, is a bit of rock from the prison in which St. Peter and St. Paul were kept for eight months. This prison was no other than the frightful Mamertine Prison, a dungeon deep under ground, from which the most cunning, or the most desperate, prisoner could never hope to escape. It is hewn out of the solid rock, and is, in truth, two prisons in one; for the upper prison opens into the lower one by a large hole, through which the unfortunate persons, condemned to live in it, were let down by ropes or chains, and were raised from it in the same manner.

Such was this specimen of the prisons of pagan Rome! The horrors of this dark well or cavern, shut out from the light of day, are not to be imagined; but we read that to St. Peter and St. Paul it was a place rich in consolation; for they had the holy satisfaction

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of converting, by their teachings and their example, Processus and Martinian, the captains of their guard, and forty-seven others, to the Christian faith. Tradition tells us, that having no water in the prison with which to baptize their disciples, at the prayer of St. Peter a fountain sprang up from the stone floor; and this fountain is to be seen, to the wonder of all travelers, to this day. A commemoration of SS. Processus and Martinian, as martyrs for the same faith as SS. Peter and Paul, is made on the second day of July; by which we can see what sort of converts they proved to be, who were baptized in this miraculous fountain.

From this living tomb of the Mamertine Prison, the two great and holy apostles were led forth, on the same day—the venerable St. Peter to be crucified, and, at his own request, with his head downward, declaring it too great an honor to die the same death as his Divine Master, and St. Paul to be beheaded. Their martyrdoms, sealing their preaching with the testimony of their blood, took place on the 29th of June; and on this day they are honored, the world over, as the chiefest of the apostles.

There is another feast called the "Feast of St. Peter's Chains," celebrated on the 1st of August, to commemorate the deliverance of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, from Herod's prison by the hand of an angel, as related in chapter xii of the Acts of the Apostles. A watch-guard is commonly worn in Rome, even by Protestants, called St. Peter's Chains, in which one sees, on a very small scale of course, the chain that fell

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from the limbs of St. Peter, when they were touched by the angel, with the manacles for the hands, and the fetters for the feet, and the cross with the head hanging downward, upon which St. Peter suffered death.

To Catholics, who wear this watch-guard in a spirit of faith, and with proper dispositions of piety and virtue, an indulgence has been granted; and, to such Catholics, no chain of gold can ever seem so precious as this rude semblance of St. Peter's Chains.

You may think that I have forgotten about the paper-weight, with its delicately cut likeness of Pius IX., and about the "Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome," or that I had no special reason for speaking of them together. But I have not forgotten any of them; and you will see why the Roman paper-weight and the Roman Feast, and the Roman Pontiff are all associated in my mind, as I wish them to be in yours.

Learned writers like Cardinal Baronius and Thomassin, show, by many examples, that it was an ancient custom with the churches to celebrate every year an anniversary festival in honor of the consecration of their bishops. If you look over the "Ordo," or ecclesiastical almanac, for 1869, you will find at least five of these festivals celebrated in the United States during this year. If, at the present day, when there are so many bishops that one might suppose it possible to omit these anniversaries without danger, we still see them so carefully observed, how much more should we expect to see them noticed during those first ages

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of Christianity, when it was of the greatest importance to mark every event of this kind.

The "Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome" is spoken of in very ancient Lives of the Saints (or Martyrologies as they were formerly called, since nearly all the early saints were martyrs or suffered what equalled a martyrdom, like St. John the Evangelist), and thusgives us the best proof possible that St. Peter was actually the first Bishop of Rome. We say, "The Chair of St. Peter," because our word chair is taken from a Latinized Greek word *cathedra*, which means a seat or a chair. The church in which the bishop of a diocese has his canopied chair is called the cathedral; and the "Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome," is simply the festival commemorating St. Peter's taking charge of the Roman diocese, or, of taking his seat in the rude chair of the first Bishop of Rome.

I do not think any of my young readers would be surprised if they should be told, that the early Christians had such love and respect for St. Peter that the very chair on which he sat was of priceless value in their eyes; or, that they kept this chair so carefully, with so much veneration, that in after ages it was beautifully covered with choice woods, and materials far more costly than the chair itself, which in this way has come down to the present time, and stands in the great church of St. Peter in Rome.

Still, it is not in honor of this chair, however venerated, that the feast is kept, from age to age, with so much solemnity and devotion; but to honor the office

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and the authority of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome, and vicegerent of Jesus Christ Himself as the head of His Church; thus making the See or diocese of Rome one with the See or diocese of Peter. The present Pope, Pius IX., is the successor of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome, and, like St. Peter, represents our Lord Himself, as the head of the Church. Devotion to Pius IX. is devotion to St. Peter, and is a grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of Jesus Christ, not only in appointing a visible head for His Church during the life time of St. Peter, but in appointing successors to St. Peter, whose duty it should be, like that of St. Peter, to "feed the sheep," "feed the lambs," of His flock; who should hold, like St. Peter, the "keys of the kingdom of Heaven," with the power to do for us in all things as St. Peter did for the first Christians, and who should prove himself to be the "Rock," on which the Church stands securely in every age—so securely, that, as our Lord declared, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

St. John was called the "Beloved Disciple." It was St. John who sat next to our Lord at the Last Supper, and leaned his head on the breast of his Master with such a familiar tenderness. Unlike St. Peter who denied Him; denied, as he stood warming himself by the fire in the hall of the Roman governor, that he was a disciple of Jesus Christ, or that he even knew Him; unlike the other disciples, who all fled from Him when they saw Him betrayed by Judas and in the hands of the rough soldiers, St. John stood,

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with the Blessed Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, beside the ignominious cross of this same Master and Lord, and received His dying requests. All this might, very naturally, lead us to think that St. John would be appointed the "Chief of the Apostles," if for no other reason than his affectionate fidelity to his Master, and to His cause. But, we find, instead, the keys given to St. Peter, with this very remarkable charge: "And thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren;" as if the grace of perseverance would be given to them through Peter. St. Paul tells us that after his miraculous conversion, by which he was divinely instructed in the faith of Christ, he "saw none of the apostles save Peter only;" thus acknowledging that St. Peter, alone, as the head of the Church, had the authority to set upon him the seal of a teacher sent from God.

In this authority, or supremacy, of St. Peter over all the other apostles, we find the reason why the present Bishop of Rome, or the Pope, Pius IX., who is the successor of St. Peter, and invested with the same rights, has authority over all the other bishops in the world. To deny this authority, is to deny that our Lord left a head to His Church, or that there is any voice in the world that can tell us what is truth or what is error, what is right or what is wrong; and this is why a belief in the Pope as the successor of St. Peter, and with the same authority as St. Peter, is the one mark by which we know the true religion from the false religion, the true reformer from the false re-

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former. So long as a religion acknowledges Peter as the head of the Church, and is ready to be reproved by Peter if it errs—so long as a reformer is ready to stand still, to go back, or to go forward, as Peter, the head of the Church, shall decide—so long that religion and that reformer is safe. Fidelity to Peter as the Pastor of Christians, submission to Peter in all things that belong to religion and to morals, is the crowning glory of a people and of a nation; it is the only safety of bishops and of priests, as well as of every lay-man and of every lay-woman; none of us are safe unless we are good and devout children of St. Peter and the See of Rome. Nothing, also, is told more plainly in the history of Christian nations than this—that the happiest time a nation has ever had, the "Golden Age" of that nation, the age of which the people are most proud, the age about which historians like, most of all, to write, and poets to sing, and artists to paint, was that age in which the people were most delighted to honor Jesus Christ by honoring His Vicar, the Bishop of Rome, the Father of the Faithful; in which the people and their rulers were guided by the same sublime rules of universal justice that have guided the Roman Pontiffs in all generations, and in which their freedom was the holy freedom of obedience—obedience to the laws of God and the laws of Christian society as taught by the Church.

It is with this grand and universal fact before my eyes that, on the very first pages of this book which invites the children of America to read, and learn by

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heart, why they should love and revere the saints of God, I have placed the glorious names of St. Peter and St. Paul; in the hope that these same young readers, when they are men and women, will make a Golden Age for their country; will so love their Church, and so practice its holy instructions, as to crown their patriotism by their faith.

But if this is true of nations and of governments, it is much more easily seen to be true of the Church herself. It is not by declaring ourselves independent of the See of Peter, that we are to reform abuses or repair wrongs; it is not by declaring ourselves independent of the See of Peter, that we can display our strength. "Union is strength;" and to weaken or break any of those holy, and mysteriously powerful links, which unite the Church, in all countries, to its centre, the See of Peter, is like breaking some of those wonderful little bones, or sinews, or bands that wind round and round the curious joints in these bodies of ours. You have sometimes seen a child lame for life, and all because some of these little bones or muscles had been injured. It is in the same way that people who try to live without the authority of Rome, or who do things against the spirit of the Church if not against the letter, make the Church lame, and feeble, and even lukewarm, in some portions of a Catholic country. People may not become heretics in such a community, but they are very far from being really good Catholics; and all because they have fancied they knew better than the Vicar of Christ and the successor

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of St. Peter. It is by attaching ourselves more and more closely, to the See of Peter, that the Church will be stronger, more venerable, and more beautiful, not only in Rome, but at home. Let us cultivate then, my dear children, a very lively and devoted affection to our Holy Father, the dear and most venerable Pius IX.; let us feel a deep interest in every word that the Holy Father speaks to the great Christian family in whatever part of the world it may be. Remember that he speaks to us in America, just as much as to the people in Europe; remember that we are as dear to him as they are, and, indeed, one would sometimes think even dearer, so many and so fatherly are the marks of his interest in all that concerns us.

I remember one very touching story about the kind heart of Pius IX. It is the custom of the Holy Father on certain days to see and speak with all who may desire to see and speak with him, from all parts of the world. There was, some years ago, a rich American family visiting Rome, and they had with them a good negro waiting-woman, and this good waiting-woman was a Catholic. Margaret, this was her name, heard so many people talking about the dear "Papa," as the Italians call him, that she had, every day, a stronger and stronger desire to see him; not only as she did sometimes when she was riding with her mistress, and they would say, "O, there is the Pope!" and she would catch a glimpse of a dear old gentleman dressed in a woolen soutane and broad-brimmed hat like a priest, with this one difference, that everything

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he wore was white, walking briskly over the road leading on to the country around Rome called the Campagna—she not only wished to see him in this way, but she wished, this poor Margaret, to see him, and speak to him, and get his blessing, all to herself? You may think this a great piece of presumption in the poor slave woman Margaret, and so, my dear children, it certainly would have been if the Holy Father had been merely a king or an emperor; but being, as he is, the Father of the Christian world, poor Margaret was as much his child as the princesses of Italy or the empress of France. Poor Margaret longed for this until she found courage to stand, with all the others who were waiting, in one of the great halls in the palace of the Vatican, until the Holy Father should come into the hall. At last he came in at one side of the hall, and came slowly down that same side to the very end, speaking, as a gentleman in waiting would tell him their names, with each person; and this happy person would kneel down and kiss the ring of the Holy Father, and get his blessing. Margaret saw a great many noble-looking ladies with their beautiful, fair-haired children, waiting patiently; and she saw the Holy Father, as he came to them, take each of these little children by the hand; and it seemed to her that he gave to them a tenderer blessing, even, than to their mothers. She was so interested that she forgot to be afraid; and there was something too in the face of this good Pope that gave her courage, and she felt happy just to watch every motion, and every look

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that he gave to those whom he saluted as he came towards her. At last the gentleman who had all their names, called out, "Margaret." Margaret! only Margaret! There was no Madame, no Mademoiselle, nor even Mrs. or Miss to this name of Margaret. Very likely many who waited near her were astonished to see her there, only they remembered in Rome what they are very apt to forget at home, that before the Vicar of Christ all men and all women are of one blood. As I have said, this single name of Margaret was called out; and then how shall we describe poor Margaret's feelings? For the hundredth part of a second she was humbled to the dust, at what seemed her boldness; but the next thought that went, like lightning, through her mind was one of joy; and so poor Margaret bowed with her soul full of love and veneration at the feet of the Holy Father. She did not dare to press her dark lips to the ring on his hand, still less to kiss that hand, as so many had done before her, not knowing that it was the *ring* which they should kiss. O no, she did none of these things, but seemed rather to wish to kiss the floor under his shining feet. But the Holy Father, who had shown so much benignity to the beautiful, fair-haired children, had a deeper and a tenderer benignity in store for the poor slave woman, Margaret. He lifted her from the floor, on which she had sunk in an ecstacy of happy humility; raised her up, spoke to her in her own tongue, asked her to tell him her story and also the story of her people in America. How long it took to

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hear all that he wanted poor Margaret to tell him! No one in all that vast hall seemed to interest the good Pope like poor Margaret, and when she had answered all his questions, he gently told her to kiss his ring and kneel for his blessing, "not only for herself but for all her people in bondage." Do you, can you imagine how happy a heart, how comforted a spirit, poor Margaret carried in her dark bosom, as she flew, rather than walked, away from the Vatican palace that day, and how, instead of going straight to her kind mistress, (for she was a kind one,) she stopped at the first church door, and poured out her joy at the foot of some altar where the little lamp told her Jesus was waiting to receive her thanksgiving!

It is to kindle in your young hearts a single spark of personal affection to this holy old man, this venerable priest, this Bishop of Bishops, that I have told you this story of poor Margaret; and it is for the same purpose, that is, to keep alive the love of Catholics for their chief Bishop, that the Church has gathered around her, at Rome, schools or colleges, where students from every part of the world are educated under the eye, and at the knee, of the Vicar of Christ. You have all heard of the American College at Rome, where the pious youth of our own country, who wish to become priests, Roman priests, find themselves perfectly at home. You have also heard of the College of the Propaganda, to which Italians are not admitted, while it welcomes to its noble halls, to its magnificent course of studies, to the teachings of its

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great professors, the elegant Greek, the ardent Celt, the enthusiastic American, the mild East Indian and even the black Ethiopian, who has inherited from his barbarous ancestors the very gait of the lion, that untamed king of the desert—all are found within the walls of the College of the Propaganda, and all are welcomed in their native tongue, and all so instructed as to be able to carry to distant countries, the ripe learning, the solid piety and the profound love for the See of Peter, which are best learned under the smile of the benignant Pontiff himself. One of these students of the Propaganda, who wished to bring away such a memento of his college life as only a student of the Propaganda could ever possess, asked from each of his companions a copy of the Lord's Prayer written in his own language. One hundred and ten different languages and dialects were thus collected, and taken with him, as a prize, to his home in a foreign land. Another student brought with him, to America, two photographed groups, in which were the Rector and Prefects of the college and several of his companions, and in both these groups were pure Africans, one of whom was leaning, affectionately, on the shoulder of a handsome Greek.

No student in one of the national colleges, or in the college of the Propaganda, would leave Rome without an interview with the Holy Father and getting his special blessing, and, very often, certain privileges that a priest prizes above all others; nor is he ever allowed to leave the Holy Father without some gift, as a memento

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of that never to be forgotten interview, with the universal Bishop of the Catholic Priest; and the simple gift with the name of the Roman Pontiff written by his own hand, more than all the blessing, drops into his heart as a seed of devotion to the See of Peter; nor can the labors, the sorrows, and too often, the sore disappointments and humiliations of his missionary life, extinguish the flames of love lighted up in the soul of the Roman priest, who often renders, in his least acts, a fealty to the See of Peter as graceful as it is sincere.

Will, then, any of my young readers fail to mark the "Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome," on the 18th of January, as one especially dear to an American Catholic?

There is a tradition about St. Peter, and repeated by no less a person than St. Ambrose of Milan, that all my young friends will like to remember, for it tells a great deal, in a few words, of that fervent and very dear old apostle, whose imperfections have a charm about them like the imperfections of your very, very little brothers and sisters; and this is, the charm of unaffected simplicity, or of perfect honesty. Dear St. Peter! The world has always held up its hands in horror at his denial of his Master, in contempt at his cowardice, for he was afraid of a poor maid-servant in the house of the Roman governor! And yet the world goes on denying Jesus day after day! and seldom, alas! like St. Peter, hears the cock crow, or weeps one bitter tear of contrition; while St. Peter, not only "went out and wept bitterly" in that early twilight of Good Fri-

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day morning, but he wept his life long for this one hour of weakness; wept until the tears ploughed deep furrows down his good, honest cheeks, browned with travel, and hardships, and labors, in the service of the Master he once "swore that he knew not."

This is the tradition, or the story, told about St. Peter, by those who knew him, and told by those who heard it to the Christians they knew, until it came down, in the fourth century, to that great doctor and father of the Church, St. Ambrose.

Nero, that most cruel of all the cruel Roman emperors, had begun his terrible persecution of the Christains; and the little flock of lambs among the raging pagan wolves, trembling at the idea of losing their beloved Bishop, begged him to fly from Rome, if only for a little while. St. Peter at last told them he would do as they wished; and, when night came, he took a crooked way among narrow and dark streets, until he came out on the road called the "Appian Way." Then he walked very fast, and expected to be soon out of the reach of his fierce persecutors. But as he was hurrying along, he was met about two miles from the city gate, by his Lord—the dear Lord and Master he had served so long and so faithfully, and so ardently—traveling towards the Rome that St. Peter had just left in such haste. Struck with amazement, poor Peter cried out, "Lord, whither art thou going?" To which his Master, looking at St. Peter with his old, sorrowful look of loving reproach, answered: "I am going to Rome to be crucified again;" and then van-

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ished, was quite gone. Poor St. Peter! He was young when he said to his Lord, who wanted to wash his feet, "Nay, Lord, Thou shalt never wash my feet;" and when his Master said, "If I do not wash thy feet thou hast no part with me," St. Peter cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." St. Peter was young then; but now, when his Master met him on the Appian Way at night, flying from Rome, he was old; his short curling hair was white with years, and troubles, and hardships; his face had deep wrinkles in it, and, as I have said, two furrows had been ploughed down his cheeks by his tears of repentance for one hour of weakness; his limbs, too, were stiff with age, and the pains of age; but, although he was old in body, the soul, the mind, the heart, were all as full of life, and of feeling—fuller, a thousand times, of love for Jesus—as on that night of the last supper. How that look of tender reproach pierced his heart! How it took away from him the fear of Nero, and even the fear of leaving his little flock orphans! St. Peter knew, then, that Jesus would take care both of the sheep and the lambs, and he turned, turned without a moment's delay, toward the great, wicked, cruel, blood-thirsty city of Rome; thirsting always for blood, but above all else for Christian blood; turned towards Rome and entered again the great gate of the city, and, being seen by some cruel spy on the watch for Christians, was seized, and thrust down into the lowest and darkest chamber of that frightful Mamertine Prison that I have told you about, where he and St. Paul

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spent eight months together, and from which he came out to be crucified for his Master.

Michael Angelo made a statue representing Jesus Christ as He appeared to St. Peter on the Appian Way; and a copy of it is in the small church built on the spot made sacred by this mysterious meeting.

If you think for a moment, how wonderful seem those eight months spent together by St. Peter and St. Paul in the dark Mamertine Prison! Two such heroic souls, crowned by such heavenly graces of fortitude, of love for God, of love for their fellow men! How great must have been the comfort that each gave the other, and what conversations they must have had about the Redeemer for whom they were ready to lay down, or take up again, their lives! The picture of St. Paul that I have selected for you, represents him addressing St. Peter in prison, upon some of those sublime occasions when the darkness of their dungeon was changed to more than the brightness of day by the angels who attended upon them, and who brought to them, in place of the worldly comforts for which men are ready to give away Heaven and the hope of seeing God, the holy delights of the saints in glory.

But it is time to say something of St. Paul, the Apostle. Nothing in the Sacred Scriptures is told with a grander simplicity than the story of the conversion of St. Paul, as you will find it in the Acts of the Apostles. The fiery, but honest, zeal of Saul in persecuting the first Christians; his standing by and

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consenting to the death of the holy deacon, St. Stephen; the awful brightness of the heavenly vision that met him on the way to Damascus, before which the noon-day sun was like a twilight or an eclipse, and which so dazzled the eyes of the proud Jew who had learned philosophy at the feet of the grave Gamaliel, that he entered Damascus, not as the bold defender of the Jewish synagogue and the Jewish law, but as a helpless blind man, led by the hand through the streets of that sunny oriental city; led past all the groves of olives and figs, all the pleasant gardens and rainbow-tinted fountains of beautiful Damascus, to a quiet lodging in the "street called Straight, at the house of one Simon, a tanner;" the three days of penitential fast, during which he tasted neither bread nor water, his great soul bowed down under the new sense of having despised, rejected and persecuted, not a mere man, however good, but the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father; for Saul, having been divinely instructed by the vision, now knew that this Jesus, whom he had persecuted, was no other than the Lord who would, one day, judge him; the visit to Saul of the aged Christian, Ananias, who, at the command of God, laid his hands on the blinded eyes of the once proud persecutor, now the meek disciple of Jesus crucified; the falling, at the touch of Ananias, of thick scales from his eyes, like those scales of pride, of prejudice, and of worldliness that made him "kick against the pricks," or evidences of God's truth, and which fell from the eyes of his mind at the touch of faith;

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and, when his sight had been thus restored, the joy of his baptism; after which he rose up, and took food, and was strong again; his going out into the streets of Damascus, no longer the Jew, Saul of Tarsus, but Paul, Paul the Christian, Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles—all these wonders and miracles are told to us by St. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, in such a manner as to make one certain that they could only have been learned from the lips of St. Paul himself.

In the whole wonderful history of the triumphs of Christianity over the powers of this world, there is not one so startling, and so magnificent, as the conversion of St. Paul; not one that was wrought so directly by the visible power of God; nor has there been, in all the eighteen hundred years since the ascension of our Lord, a convert who has been more ready to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" or more prompt in obeying that will when it has been made known. This readiness on the part of St. Paul, is what we call, "the grace of correspondence," or the grace of a will corresponding, or agreeing, with the will of God; the grace to desire what God desires, to will what God wills. Once, too, a Christian, St. Paul did not pause to count how much his sacrifice had cost him. Instead of this, he tells us that "I counted all things as loss that I might gain Christ." Once a Christian, he remembered, that "although many run, one gaineth the prize;" and "therefore," he tells us, "I chastised myself, lest, while preaching to others, I myself, should be a castaway." Once, a Christian,

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once converted to the spirit of Christ's Church, not merely conformed to its outward practices or duties, "neither principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth," could separate him from Jesus, and Jesus crucified. To him scourging had lost the sting of disgrace; and the judgment halls of kings and of Roman governors, the hill of Mars in the midst of the polished and learned people of Athens, and the dungeon at midnight, when the earthquake of God's anger opened the prison doors, and loosed the fetters of this suffering confessor to His truth, were so many pulpits, from which he preached Jesus crucified, until multitudes were persuaded to be, not like Felix the governor "almost," but, like St. Paul himself, "altogether" Christians.

Yet neither his sacred office as an apostle, nor his sanctity as a true saint, ever hid the qualities peculiar to him as a man. He tells us in his epistles, that he labored with his hands that he might not burden the churches with his support. While he was converting thousands by his preaching, he practiced industriously the trade, which, according to the Jewish custom of teaching some handicraft to every boy, he had learned in his youth, and made tents to supply himself with the necessaries of life. We can also see, very plainly, that although St. Peter was chosen while an illiterate fisherman, to be the Prince of the Apostles, St. Paul did not think that he must forget the learning which fell to his lot as a youth and young man, in order to be like St. Peter; but he uses this worldly

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knowledge, learned at the feet of the greatest doctors of his day, to convert the most cultivated and elegant nations of the world. God, who made use of the simplicity of St. Peter to confound the wise, made use of the learning of St Paul to the same end. Humility is not, necessarily, the companion of ignorance; for ignorance is often arrogant; while ripe learning is, quite as often, patient and gentle towards the unlettered and dull of understanding. It is, also, very plain, that St. Paul did not think it against sanctity to claim his rights as a Roman citizen. He was born in Tarsus, a city to which the Roman emperors had granted many privileges. These privileges St. Paul did not consider it necessary to give up in order to be humble. Many saints have given up the privileges of their rank or position, and their motives have been purely supernatural motives, and very pleasing to God and very much praised by all good men. But St. Paul, who was enlightened in a special manner upon all things relating to Christian precept, claimed his rights as a Roman citizen; and he did so from motives honorable to him as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

God has created us with reason, and sensibility, or a feeling of propriety; and if we look attentively at the lives and actions of the saints, we shall find that they acted, in every instance, with admirable prudence, and a most delicate regard to all the circumstances of their state in life. It is safe to say that the saints did not commit blunders, for blunders always show carelessness, somewhere, or the overlooking of some impor-

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tant fact; and the saints were wonderfully circumspect. There is something very noble, and very courageous, and very edifying, in the protest of St. Paul against the cowardly cruelty of his countrymen who acoused him, and of the Jewish tribunal which condemned him to be scourged, as no Roman citizen could lawfully be, and, finally, in his appeal from the time-serving Roman governors to Cæsar himself; and this example of holy courage should banish forever from Christian souls, the pretended meekness that is only base cowardice. The meekness of the saints is a meekness full of courage. It never yields to injustice, as injustice, but as to God, who may allow the unjust decree to injure us for a time. The saints never "called evil good;" they suffered injuries and wrongs and insults, and the persecutions which they could not avoid; but they never mistook injustice for justice, nor felt obliged to do so from a false notion of charity.

Again: many persons, when reading the life of a favorite saint, by trying to copy, literally, the actions of this saint, have made sad mistakes. Never imitate as one machine imitates the work of another machine, the actions even of a saint. God, who made the saint you admire, also made you, and made you a little unlike any other being in the world; as much so as one leaf differs from every other leaf even on its own tree. God respects this individuality, that makes you a little different from everybody else in the world, and His Church respects it, and he wishes you to respect it in yourself. St. Paul tells us that "one star differs from

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another star in glory;" and no two saints of God are, or can be, exactly alike, because the saints are all very honest people, very sincere people, very simple or single minded people. Instead, therefore, of being scandalized, as I have heard people speak of being scandalized, at the peculiarities of St. Peter or of St. Paul, you should look upon them as proofs of that honesty, without which people cannot be real saints. There is no such thing possible as a deceitful, make-believe saint, or one who performs his actions to be seen of men. The saints perform their actions as if standing in the sight of God, who cannot be deceived ; and it is the doing of our actions for this All-seeing Eye that keeps them single, honest, without guile.

You will see that I have left you to read over in the Four Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles, many events in the lives of these great saints. I should be sorry to see any book taking the place of the sublime narratives in the Holy Scriptures; and all other books, if properly written, will add to our enjoyment of the sacred writings.

The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul is on the 25th of January; and no one who has, like St. Paul, received the grace of conversion to the true faith, can fail on that day to pray with the Universal Church, that he who was "a vessel of election, holy Paul the Apostle, will intercede for us to God who chose him."

As we look back, through eighteen hundred years, to that glorious morning of Christianity, when the Apostles and Evangelists, and the first saints of the

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Church, to whom God gave such shining marks of favor, stood before the whole world crowned with supernatural faith, hope and charity, "rejoicing like strong men to run the race" of perfection, how puny seem all our own feeble efforts to serve that Divine Master, who is our Master as well as theirs! And we are ready, for an instant, to let go our hold upon the plough, losing the courage that is necessary for perseverance. But true humility, true faith, hope, charity, look only to seeing God's plans succeed, and think of their own only so far as they help on, or are a part of, the plans of God. The words of the poet,

"They also serve who only stand and wait,"

may console many a hidden saint, who offers to Jesus Christ the homage of his supreme love; not privileged, indeed, like the burning thurible, to swing before the altar, sending up clouds of fragrant incense; but, like night-blooming flowers, permitted to sanctify by the perfume of humble virtues the solitary places, and make glad the wildernesses of human life.

St. Peter is always known in pictures by the keys in his hand, symbolising his spiritual power as Chief of the Apostles, or by the cross planted with the head downward. There is a picture of his crucifixion by so early a painter as Giotto, and one of Perugino's most beautiful pictures, as well as one of Raphael's, represents him receiving the keys from our Lord. Every event of his apostolic life has been the subject of some work of art by the greatest masters in paint-

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ing, sculpture and mosaic; but by none with more feeling than by the Dominican monk, Fra Angelico, who painted that scene, after the Last Supper, of the washing of the feet, when St. Peter exclaimed, in an ecstacy of love and worship, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" It was at such times that St. Peter breathed forth the first flames of that ardent devotion which characterised his life as an apostle. The Rock, and at the same time the timid disciple; the life-long penitent and the Head of the Church—such is St. Peter, than whom none of the apostles has more claims upon our love, our veneration, and our gratitude.

The picture of St. Peter which you will see as you read these pages, is drawn after a picture by Overbeck, the greatest of living artists. Overbeck, now more than eighty years of age,* lives in Rome, and has, ever since his conversion to the Catholic faith, devoted himself to painting religious pictures. This venerable man receives visitors at his studio every Sunday afternoon, and takes the trouble to explain these paintings, and drawings in charcoal, on his easel and upon the walls. A series of pictures by him, called, "Forty Illustrations of the Four Gospels," is a wonder of religious art in our own day. Sitting in the shadow of St. Peter's Chair at Rome, the works of his pencil

*Between the writing of these pages and their going to the press, the death of this Christian Artist has been announced to the world.

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and brush breathe forth the choicest aroma of piety and of faith.

The picture of St. Paul, was chosen from a great number, as giving a sublime idea of the great Preacher and Doctor of the Gentiles; and, also, as a votive offering to the Patron Saint of the "Order of St. Paul the Apostle," in the United States of America.

Let us close this sketch by repeating the collect used by the Church in addressing both these glorious saints, St. Peter and St. Paul:

"Protect thy people O Lord, and preserve, by Thy continual defence, those who confide in the patronage of the Apostles Peter and Paul!"

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SAINT AGNES.

IN that grand old city, Rome, while its beautiful temples, now used for the worship of the one true God, were given up to the idolatrous worship of gods and goddesses unworthy of the love or respect of one good man, woman, or child; while the rich, and the learned, and the noble, laughed at the few Christians, who, they supposed, lived among them as fools, or vagabonds, or worse still, as knaves and deceivers; while the emperors, who dressed in purple and gold and jewels, when they gave banquets and festivals, knew that the sport which would most please the Roman people was to give a few Christians to the lions or the panthers, or to wild cows; while Rome was this corrupt, pagan Rome, instead of what it now is, "The Holy City" of the world—at this time, this dark time as it seemed for the persecuted Church of God, lived, in this very Rome, a lovely girl whose name was Agnes.

The parents of Agnes were of ancient and noble family, so ancient and so noble that no one supposed

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they could belong to the despised followers of a crucified Jew; but ancient and noble as the house was from which they came, they prized, above all this worldly distinction, the holy and venerable name of Christian. The little Agnes grew up a flower of Christian grace, an example of Christian virtue. You must remember, my dear children, that when Agnes lived in Rome, Christians could have no grand churches, no processions, no choirs or singers, no Christmas and Easter days, that would attract any attention from the pagan world around them. It was not even safe to have one's nearest friend know one to be a Christian; for to be known as a Christian was to be thrown to wild beasts, or beheaded, or burned to death. The Church, therefore, watching then, as now, with a supernatural prudence over the welfare of her children, advised all Christians to avoid the least display of their religion; to live quietly; to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the mass, not in public places, but in the houses of those nobles, who, like the parents of St. Agnes, could easily receive large numbers into their houses without exciting suspicion; or, in still darker days of persecution, they assisted at the Holy Mass in Catacombs, rooms dug under ground, with large apartments and galleries leading into each other. In the walls of these underground apartments were deposited the venerated bodies of Christian martyrs; and the ranks of the martyrs included nearly all the faithful departed in those days, since few, comparatively, died natural deaths; and thus while mass was cele-

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brating, instead of having five relics in the altar-stone as every priest must now have when he says mass, there were hundreds of relics all around; bodies, and bones, and phials full of the blood of martyred saints. O, my dear children, with what fervor, with what devotion, must not the Christians of that time have assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, seeing so much to remind them that they too, at any moment, might be called upon to die for Him, who had first died for them! How precious must that religion have become to them for which they had seen so many willingly give up rank, wealth, friendship, family love, and even life!

In such a school of devotion was reared the little Agnes. The only child of a noble family, she was often obliged to appear at the luxurious banquets of her relatives and friends. But it was not for such scenes of revelry and splendor that Agnes ever pined. She loved better (Oh, how infinitely better!) that early gathering around the altar in her father's palace, or among the dark chambers of a Catacomb, where, long before daybreak, some good priest, at the risk of life, consecrated the Host and distributed to the faithful—who at the same risk had flocked around their pastor—this "Bread of the Strong," this Body broken and this Blood shed for sinners. May we not believe that among these worshippers none received more frequently, or with greater eagerness, this "Holy Food" than the gentle Agnes?

The companions of our Agnes dressed in rich stuffs, wore jewels beyond price, (as we should think), and

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used costly perfumes, devoting the greater part of their time to decking their persons. But the noble Agnes followed none of their vain customs. She always appeared at their gay banquets, among the richly attired guests, in a plain robe of white; a mystery to her pagan friends, but easily understood by a Christian as the white robe of the child-spouse of Christ Jesus. She never wore jewels. Jesus was her jewel, her crown. No diamond, no sapphire, no emerald, ever shone to her eyes as the face of her Beloved; no opal in its changing beauty, no pearl in its soft loveliness, could rival the mild look of her Redeemer, who seemed to be ever at her side or above her as a vision—the present beatitude, as He was to be the eternal joy, of the blessed child Agnes. No wonder, then, if when the time came for the sweet sacrifice of that unspotted life, if when a motive of chagrin, or envy, or hatred of extraordinary goodness, moved some reckless, wicked pagan to dog her quiet footsteps under the suspicion of her being a Christian until he could prove her to be so, and then report the only daughter of a noble Roman house as a follower of the lowly Nazarene, crucified between two thieves—no wonder if when that time came, it came to her not as a trial but as a triumph. It was not the tender girl, torn rudely from a sheltering home, from doting parents, to be given over to the dungeon and to the torturers; but the exile, at last setting sail for her native land; the bride, going forth to meet an eternal Spouse.

The bloody command of the Roman emperor, Dio-

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cletian, against the Christians, appeared in March, 303; and the next year, on the 21st of January, the name of St. Agnes was added to the list of Christ's martyrs. The "Acts" of this darling saint, this cherished virgin martyr, who has been, ever since the year 304, the admiration of Christendom, were written by no less a person than the learned doctor, the holy confessor, and renowned bishop of Milan, St. Ambrose. These wonderful Acts of St. Agnes prove how dearly our Lord prized the innocence of this holy child, since an angel defended her from the sinful approaches of wicked men. They also prove what courage is given to the most tender and timid when Jesus calls on them to suffer for Him. The noble and delicate maiden shrinks from the blasphemous crowd, until she finds herself, like her Master, in the hands of a furious rabble, and for His sake. She faints at the sight of racks, and hot pincers, and horrid instruments of cruelty, until she is told they are intended for her, as a Christian; knowing, as she does, that through these torments lies her way to God. St. Agnes was only thirteen years old when she was taken before the Roman tribunal to answer to the single accusation of being a Christian; and if we wish to know how the little ones of the household of Christ can look their torturers in the face, we may study the Acts of this young girl, Agnes.

As I have said, she was only thirteen years old; and the night before that morning in January, when she appeared before the dreadful tribunal, had been spent

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partly in prison, partly in the midst of human beings worse even, one would think, than the demons themselves. Yet when she comes before the judge her face has lost none of its serenity, none of its celestial beauty. We are told that a murmur of displeasure ran through the crowd when this mere child was brought in between armed guards; but the harsh prefect, who had steeled his heart against all pity, seeing that her hands were free ordered them to be put in irons. The jailor took the smallest pair of manacles, and put them on her slender wrists, but she playfully dropped her hands and the cruel irons fell to the floor. With a face deeply moved, we may believe with a heart far more so, the jailor said to the prefect, "Such infant wrists deserve other bracelets." Finding that she could not be put in irons on account of her extreme delicacy, the prefect showed his severity by his rough questions, to which she returned only celestial answers in praise of her Heavenly Bridegroom; he then commanded her to offer incense to the gods; but she could not be compelled to move her hand, slight as it was, excepting to make the blessed sign of the cross, until, exasperated by her courage and constancy, he ordered her to be beheaded. Agnes, transported with joy at this sentence, still more at the sight of the headsman, "went to the place of execution," says St. Ambrose, "more cheerfully than others go their wedding." Every means was tried to break her noble resolution of suffering for Christ, but in vain, and having made a short prayer she bowed her beautiful young head to the

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stroke of the sword, to be united forever in heaven to her Divine Spouse.

Her body, that innocent body which had been "the temple of the Holy Ghost," and which might well be looked upon as a venerated relic, was buried at a short distance from Rome, on the road called the "Nomentan Way." On the very spot where she was buried a church was built, which, in 625, was an ancient edifice and was, at that time, repaired. A statue of St. Agnes stands over the high altar; beneath the altar is a sarcophagus containing her relics; relics so well authenticated that the most unwilling must admit them to be the bones of St. Agnes. In this church, also, is a mosaic (or picture made of bits of colored marble, curiously set in cement), representing her as standing, crowned, with a book in her hand; out of the earth spring flowers and a sword lies at her feet. Every year this church is visited by the Holy Father with great devotion; he is accompanied by the cardinals, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, and also by the students of the Propaganda. At one of these ceremonies, several years ago, the floor of the ancient church gave way; yet no one was killed, nor, in the end, seriously hurt. The exclamation of the devout Pontiff, as he saw the danger, was, "Immaculate Mother, pray for us!" This church gives title to a cardinal; and every year on the feast of St. Agnes the abbot of St. Peter's *ad Vincula* (or "St. Peter's Chains"), blesses in it, at high mass, two lambs, which are thence carried to the Pope who blesses them again. After this they are

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sent to the Capuchin nuns of St. Lawrence, who make of their wool "Palliums," or small white tippets, decorated with plain Roman crosses in black wool, which the Pope blesses and sends to archbishops, in all parts of the world, as an emblem of the meekness and spotless purity that should adorn their sacred office.

There is another church bearing the name of St. Agnes, within the walls of Rome, on the west side of the Piazza Navona, on the spot to which she was dragged by the soldiers and exposed to the insults of wicked men. The chamber, which for her preservation was filled with the heavenly light that blinds the eyes of the corrupt, has become, by the changes in the level of the city, an underground cell, and is now a chapel of peculiar sanctity, into which visitors descend by torchlight. On the floor of this chapel is a very ancient mosaic, and on the walls is a bas-relief (sculptured in marble like figures on a medal), representing St. Agnes with clasped hands, her long hair falling over her person, and driven onward by furious soldiers. The upper church is very beautiful, rich in precious marbles and columns. It is a custom with the Roman people to strew the floor of this church with evergreen box on her festival; and for many years I have had a sprig, picked up by a friend from one of the aisles on the joyous feast of St. Agnes of Rome.

Next to the representations of the Apostles and Evangelists there is no saint who appears in pictures as early as St. Agnes, so early, and so enthusiastic, was

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the veneration paid to this dear child. Her picture (or effigy) is found on the glass and earthern ware vessels used by the Christians in the fourth century, with her name inscribed, so as to leave no doubt of her identity. She carries in one hand the palm of the martyr, in these early pictures, and is sometimes crowned with olive. In later pictures she is always represented with a lamb, beside her or in her arms, and she is distinguished in this way among the virgin martyrs in the "Coronation of the Blessed Virgin," by Fra Angelico. The lamb is called the symbol of St. Agnes. Her name, which signifies chaste in Greek, and lamb in Latin, is found in the Canon of the Mass, and in the Litany of the Saints, and is thus invoked by every priest celebrating mass; also on solemn occasions, such as the ordination of priests, on Holy Saturday, and on all days of special prayer.

The feast of St. Agnes was formerly a holy day for women in England, as appears from the council of Worcester, held in 1240. St. Jerome, writing in the fourth century, the same in which St. Agnes "sealed her faith with her blood," tells us that the fame of St. Agnes had spread among all nations, and that hymns, and praises both in prose and verse, had been written of her in all languages. Not only St. Ambrose, but St. Augustine, another father and doctor of the Church, wrote the praises of St. Agnes; and centuries after, Thomas à Kempis, whose "Imitation," or "Following of Christ," is read by every person, as a book next to the inspired words of wisdom, honored her in

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a special manner, and he speaks of many miracles wrought, and graces received, through her intercession. St. Martin of Tours, also, was very devout to St. Agnes; and to this day there are few, even among those denying the power of her prayers, who do not love the name of Agnes, and many give it to their little daughters with the silent intention of winning her friendship and protection for the dear child of their hearts.

If every boy should love St. Stanislaus and St. Aloysius, every little girl, the world over, should love St. Agnes, the Virgin Martyr. Never let a day of your life pass without invoking the aid of her sweet prayers, that you may imitate her purity, her devotion to Jesus, and her holy courage in suffering for Him. Her feast is on the 21st day of January, and on the octave, or eighth day after the principal festival, a second Office celebrates the consoling apparition of St. Agnes to her parents, accompanied by a lamb "whiter than the driven snow," and assuring them of her perfect happiness. Invoke her specially on these days, and do not, in your petitions, forget her who writes this as a tribute of love to her patron saint.



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SAINT BENEDICT AND SAINT SCHOLASTICA.

IN the town of Norcia, in the ancient See, or diocese, of Umbria, in Italy, about 480 years after the birth of our Divine Lord, lived a Roman family of note. Very likely, my dear children, the members of this distinguished Roman family were the envy of many less fortunate, as the world calls people fortunate; and their wealth and position, and all the pleasures and honors that came with them, were talked about by their neighbors and their countrymen. But it was, after all, not their wealth, nor their position, which handed their names down to us so many hundred years after their dust had mingled with the dust of their graves; not their bravery in war, nor their wisdom in statesmanship; but the fact that in this family the Church had found two of her saints; had canonized them, had put upon them the solemn seal of God's approbation, and had placed them before the world as worthy to be imitated, and powerful to help us by their prayers.

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There is no worldly distinction, no rank, no pride of place, which in the hour of death, and certainly at the Day of Judgment, will not seem of less value than a grain of sand; whereas the glory, the joy of a saint, or the glory and the joy of the worthy father or mother of a saint, is never known until that day of general judgment, when the choice made by the children of the world in favor of a high position, great wealth, noble titles, of foolish or wicked pleasures, will be seen to have been all a mistake; and the choice of the children of God on the side of holy poverty, scrupulous innocence, self-denial, humble contrition, and faithful obedience, will be approved by the whole world, and will be called the wise choice, even by the wicked. In that day it will be seen how truly blessed, and how much to be envied, were the parents of these two holy children, St. Benedict and St. Scholastica.

This name of Benedict, by which the young Roman nobleman was baptized, means, *well said*, or *blessed*. When this truly blessed child, was fitted for the higher studies of a noble, or patrician, his father sent him to Rome and placed him in the public schools. It was not, at that time, easy for a Christian parent to find a thoroughly Christian school for his son as he can now do; but, to obtain an education such as Eutropias naturally desired for the young Benedict, he was obliged to send him where the sons of those rich Romans were educated who had despised Christianity, and who were, still, pagans in their hearts. Thrown among these half heathen boys, and compelled to have

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them for companions, this innocent youth, who "knew not what vice was, and trembled at the very shadow of sin," no sooner came to the threshold of the world, than, shocked by its wickedness, he resolved to leave it forever. Remember, my dear children, it was not the vices of grown up people that so shocked the young Benedict, but the vices of young boys; their profane talk, their immodest actions and words, their disobedience and rudeness of temper. If the boys of this generation, or of this country, are better than the Roman boys in the fifth century, it is because Christianity has made them so. There is no grandeur of noble birth, no splendor of a palace, no elegance of learning, even, that will tame the fierce passions of our fallen nature: it is Christianity which not only makes them harmless, but yokes them to the plough of usefulness, or trains them, like swift Arabian horses, to add to the pleasure and happiness of man and of society.

But, as I have said, the Roman boys of the fifth century had not been trained under Christian Brothers, nor in any of those religious schools in which the boys who read this book have learned their Christian doctrine, and good Christian conduct; and the only way in which the young Benedict could keep his innocence was to fly from their company forever. This noble resolution, so full of the heroism of the children of God, St. Benedict took when only fourteen years of age. He left Rome without telling any one, but was followed by his faithful old nurse, Cyrilla, who loved

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him most tenderly. How well her affection was returned will be seen by the following story, told by St. Gregory the Great in his life of St. Benedict.

When the young Benedict and his good nurse had traveled as far from Rome as Enfide, they stopped at this place for awhile, and found themselves among many pious people who, from choice, lived near the church of St. Peter. The nurse Cyrilla, was, no doubt, on very good terms with these neighbors, for we are told that she borrowed from one of them a sieve to clean her wheat. This sieve, in the time of St. Benedict, and for ages after, was made of clay, and had holes in the bottom of it through which the chaff was shaken, as we now sift meal and flour, while the clean kernels of wheat were left in it. The same sieve is still in use for winnowing wheat, but is made of wood. I can hardly imagine how such a thing should have happened to a woman like Cyrilla, for I must believe that she was very careful of anything belonging to another, but so it was; Cyrilla, on going out of the room, left the clay sieve on the table in such a way that it fell on the floor and was broken in two parts. On her return what was poor Cyrilla's mortification and distress to see the borrowed sieve broken through her carelessness! How, she said to herself, can I ever be excused for so great a blunder, and how shall I ever make good the loss, because this neighbor will not allow me to pay her for the sieve? Thinking of all this she began to cry bitterly. But Benedict, the religious and mild boy, when he saw his nurse

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weeping, took her grief to heart, and carrying the two pieces of the broken sieve to his room, he gave himself, with weeping, to the most earnest prayer. When he rose from his knees he found the broken sieve so perfectly restored to its former state that no sign of a break or crack was any more to be found in it. On seeing this his delight was very great, and he hastened to his good Cyrilla, lovingly consoling her, and handing back to her the sieve whole, which he had taken from her broken.

This wonder became known to every body in Enfide, and was thought so much of that they hung the sieve in the church, that the people of that generation, and of all generations to come, might see what perfect grace was with Benedict at the very beginning of his life.

Notwithstanding this tender affection for Cyrilla, shown by the miracle he was allowed to work for her, when they came to Afilium, thirty miles from Rome, he found a way to leave behind him even this dear attendant, and went further on among the wild rocks, the dark and awful mountain gorges, of the desert of Subiaco. Here he was met by a monk named Romanus, who gave him a hair-cloth shirt, and a monk's dress made of skins. But Benedict did not stop with Romanus, for he was full of the holy ambition to find God as he was found in these solitudes by the Fathers of the desert; and he went on further and further still, until, coming to the middle of a high and very steep rock, facing the south and overlooking the swiftly run-

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ning waters of the river Anio, he found a dark and narrow cave, a sort of den, into which the sun never shone. Here the boy Benedict found what he liked; and here he lived for three years, unknown to any one but the good old monk. Romanus was not light of foot, like his young friend, and could neither climb up, nor down, nor into, in any way, this strange home of a mere boy, who had resolved to love God above all things. But although he could not, himself, take the remains of his scanty meal to Benedict, he found a way to give it to him; a way so ingenious that only his love for the innocent youth could have put it into his mind. He tied the food to a cord, and with it he also tied a little bell, and these he carefully dropped down the steep rocks until they reached the opening to Benedict's dark cave. The little bell told Benedict when his kind friend had sent him his food, which he took exactly as it was sent to him, without any dainty fault finding, and with such gratitude as the saints feel for the daily bread that God alone really provides for any of us. It was God who put it into the heart of the aged monk, Romanus, to provide for the youthful hermit in a neighboring cavern; but it is God, also, who puts it into the heart of the parent, like an instinct, to provide for the tender child, and afterwards raises up guardians and friends to give him all that he needs for comfort and happiness.

The life led by St. Benedict in the desert of Subiaco lets a bright sunbeam into the mystery of the lives led by so many of the Fathers of the desert, since it is

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above nature for a boy to choose such a life. It helps us to realize what extraordinary courage God gives to those who really wish to serve Him with their whole heart. We live weak and cowardly lives, intent only upon our comfort, dainty food, nice clothing; or else upon our games, our frolics with our school mates, our selfish ambition to be the first in every thing, often enjoying our prizes altogether, or for the most part, because we "do not like to be beaten!" and we forget that God has made us capable of actions so heroic in self-denial, so beautiful with a holy enthusiasm, that before the achievements of many a youthful saint the self-denial and courage of the greatest conquerors look poor, and shorn of all their glory.

But although our young Benedict was thus, as people imagined, buried to the world, and no longer of use in it, Almighty God was bestowing the choicest graces upon this dear child, this holy youth. Lost to the eye of man, the eye of God watched, with delight, his growing sanctity in the solitude of the desert; like some beautiful flower which blooms amid the loneliest haunts of nature, and thus gives glory to its Maker where the foot of man has never trod, nor the knee of man ever bent to give Him homage.

The time at length came, when, accustomed to guard his senses, thoughts, imagination, and to curb the natural desire of the youthful heart for novelties and pleasures, our Saint of Subiaco was called forth from his beloved solitude to help other souls, seeking, like himself, to give to God the undivided homage of

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their hearts and lives. The shepherds who found him in this cell, built by the hand of nature, took him at first for a wild beast; but the holy words in which he addressed them, and the pains he took to give them religious instruction, soon made these good rustics see, beneath his dress of wild skins, a true servant of the living God. That delightful historian, Count Montalembert, whose "Monks of the West" I hope you will sometime read, says, that he "pities any Christian who has not seen this grotto of St. Benedict, this nest of the eagle and of the dove; or, who ever having seen it, has not prostrated himself with tender respect before the sanctuary from which came that flower of Christian civilization, "*The Rule of St. Benedict.*"

After he was found by the shepherds his fame went abroad, and some monks in the neighborhood asked him to be their superior. But they were soon disgusted with his perfect life, and ended by hating one whose holiness was a reproof to their own careless lives. They even went so far in this hatred as to mix poison with his wine; but the saint, having made over it, as was his custom, the sign of the cross before drinking, the glass shivered as if a stone had fallen upon it. "God forgive you, brethren," said the saint with his usual meekness and tranquility. Finding that he could do them no good, but rather provoked them to do wicked things, he left these unhappy monks and went back to his beloved cave, to live joyfully again by himself. But this could not be. Crowds of pious people came to him to be instructed in the way to become perfect, and

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as he must give them shelter, he was obliged to build, one after another, twelve monasteries, each taken care of by twelve monks; and in this way he became the superior of a large community of religious. Priests and layman, Romans and Barbarians, flocked around him as they heard of his virtues and his miracles. At his command Roman nobles, and savage Goths, took axes and hatchets, and used their strong arms to cut down, and root out, the brushwood from the soil, which since the time of Nero, that cruel persecutor of the Christians, had again become a wilderness. The painters of the noble ages of Christian art have left us many pictures representing the following scene as described by St. Gregory.

A Goth, who had become a Christian at Subiaco, and who was a zealous but clumsy workman, dropped his tool to the bottom of the lake. The rude wood-cutter was very much grieved over the loss. St. Benedict, seeing the simplicity of heart under this regret, by a miracle raised the lost tool to the top of the water, and then said to his rough but good son in Christ, "Take thy tool—take it, work, and be comforted."

Among the noble youths who joined St. Benedict were two who are often his companions in pictures; Maurus, whom Benedict made his assistant, and Placidus, whose father was lord of Subiaco; which did not, however, make his son any the less humble; for he was happy in doing the meanest of the work in the monastery, and even drew water for the community from the lake once made by the slaves of Nero. One

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day while Placidus was drawing water, his pitcher proved too heavy for him and he fell into the lake. St. Benedict ordered Maurus, his faithful disciple, to run quickly and draw the child out. At this sudden call of his superior, Maurus went, without a minute's hesitation, and full of the spirit of obedience, intent only upon doing what he had been told to do, walked out upon the water as safely as upon the ground, and drew his fellow disciple, Placidus, from the lake. St. Gregory says it is hard to say if the miracle was wrought by the command of the abbot, St Benedict, or, by the obedience of the young monk, St. Maurus; and Bossuet, the great preacher, says, that "obedience had grace given to it to obey the command, and the command had grace given to it to make the obedience safe:" and thus we have a lesson in obedience as the secret of success.

But the great fame of St. Benedict excited in the heart of a reckless man a desire to ruin our saint, by corrupting his spiritual children; and he tried to do this by sending wicked persons among the monks, as they labored in the fields, to tempt them to sin. When St. Benedict saw these wicked persons among his good monks, he knew that it was done out of hatred to himself; and to save his good monks from such awful temptations, he determined to disarm this bitter hatred by leaving his beloved desert of Subiaco. He placed wise superiors over his twelve monasteries, and went, a voluntary exile, from the place where he had lived for thirty-five years, and where he could say,

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if man ever could, that all the beauty, and order, and piety around him, was the fruit of his own labors, of his own zeal for God's interests. Traveling southward he came to a valley, surrounded by steep and wild rocks; and from the centre of this valley rose a high and lonely hill, that overlooked a beautiful river, woods and valleys, and, far off the blue waters of the Mediterranean sea. This lonely hill was Monte Cassino, which the memory of St. Benedict has made a place of pilgrimage and of sacred renown. At the foot of this mountain, which is in the kingdom of Naples, Benedict found the ruins of an old Roman town, and among these ruins he made his home with his few disciples. But while the Christian saint was at the foot of the mountain, very near its rocky summit stood a pagan temple, in which the Apollo of ancient Greece was worshipped as a god by uninstructed peasants. St. Benedict no sooner heard of these idolaters in the midst of a Christian country, than he set out for their neighborhood, and instructed them so gently and so fervently in the Christian faith, and his preaching was made so powerful by the miracles which he performed, that he persuaded them to break their idol, to destroy their false altar, and to cut down the grove, lest it should be to them the occasion of falling again into their old sin of idolatry. Upon the ruins of this temple he built two chapels, in honor of the true God and the true faith; one dedicated to St. John Baptist, the first Christian monk, the other to the great St. Martin of Tours, the same who divided

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his cloak with a beggar. Higher still than these chapels, on the very summit of the mountain, he built his monastery of Monte Cassino, from which "piety flowed," as a Pope, Urban II., once said, "as from a fountain head of Paradise."

There is so much in St. Benedict's rule of life at Monte Cassino which it would be useful for you to know, and besides, so many wonderful miracles attended this life, that I shall give you what is written about it in some of the best histories of those times, as they have come down to us through the writers of our own day who are ripe scholars and wise men.

St. Benedict, who had learned to subdue every feeling and wish that was contrary to perfection, had also the gift of reading the souls of others; of reading their very thoughts. He used this gift for the benefit of his monks, especially the young monks, with whom he worked in the fields or in the building of the houses of the community, sharing all their labors; and he used it not only when present with them, but when they were journeying, and praised them or reproved them on their return according as they had deserved.

By this supernatural knowledge he knew when they were troubled by temptations, when they were discouraged or faint hearted, or when the world looked very pleasant to them and the monastery looked very gloomy, and its labors very heavy—all this he would see; and he would say something to them, or better still say something to God for them, and they would be happy, and at peace again. One instance is told of

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this reading of the secret thought of a young monk that is indeed wonderful, and shows what insight God sometimes gives to those who have the care of souls. It should also remind us, that if it would trouble us to have a fellow mortal read our thoughts, God reads them always; for nothing is, or can be, hidden from His All-Seeing Eye.

Many rich and noble youths came to St. Benedict at Monte Cassino, as they did when he was at Subiaco, to put themselves under his direction; and many were also confided to him by wise parents, who prized his instructions, and his rule of life, more than worldly advantages. These patrician youths, born to command, labored with the brothers of the monastery on the farms or on the buildings, and followed the same rule in all things. St. Gregory tells us, that among them was the son of the first magistrate of the province. One evening when it was his turn to hold the candle at supper for the Abbot Benedict, pride rose up in his heart, and he said to himself, "What is this man that I should thus stand before him while he eats, with a candle in my hand like a slave? Am I then made to be his slave?" Immediately, as if he had spoken his proud thought aloud, St. Benedict reproved him sharply for this movement of pride, gave the candle to another, and sent him to his cell dismayed to find his most secret thought read and reproved. It was in such ways that St. Benedict curbed, as with a skillful horseman's bit and bridle, the proud spirit of the rich and noble-born young men who were sent to him;

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and who, having been born and pampered in luxury, knew not that any one had rights but themselves.

While St. Benedict was thus preaching, by precept and example, to his large family in the monastery, he did not forget the people living in the neighborhood; nor did he content himself with preaching to them the doctrines of faith; he healed the sick, cured even lepers of their dreadful disease, and those unhappy persons possessed by evil spirits were delivered from them; he provided for the hungry and the shivering poor; he paid the debts of honest men who were oppressed by those whom they owed, and gave to them the corn, and wine, and cloth, sent to him by the rich Christians. A great famine afflicting the neighboring province of Campania in 539, he gave out to the poor all the provisions of the monastery until, one day, there were only five loaves on which to feed the whole community.

The monks were frightened at seeing their food given out of their mouths, and were very melancholy. But Benedict reproached them for their want of faith, saying, "You have not enough to-day, but you shall have too much to-morrow." And so it proved; for the next morning they found at the gates of the monastery two hundred bushels of flour, given by some unknown hand.

We shall now see how this patriarch could meet the cruel conquerors of his native land. I have told you that there were some of the barbarian Goths, who had invaded Italy, in the monastery of Monte Cassino, and these helped in restoring to fertility the soil which

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their ancestors had laid waste. But there were others who hated the Italians, and, above all, hated the monks. One especially, named Galla, went the country over, mocking at, and even killing, the priests and monks whom he met, and torturing the poor peasants, or the people whom he supposed to have money, until they gave up everything to him. An unfortunate peasant, exhausted by the torments that Galla had put upon him without mercy, had this idea come into his mind, to tell his tormentor that he had given everything he owned to the Abbot Benedict. When Galla heard this he stopped his cruel tortures, but bound the arms of the helpless peasant with ropes, pushed him rudely before his horse and told him to lead the way to this Abbot Benedict. In this savage style they came to Monte Cassino. When they reached the top of the high mountain they saw the abbot seated alone, reading at the door of the monastery; "Behold," said the poor peasant, "there is the Father Benedict of whom I told thee!" The Goth, believing that here, as elsewhere, he should compel everyone to do his bidding through terror, called out in a furious tone to the saint, "Up, up, and give me what has been stored with thee by this peasant." At these fierce words the man of God raised his eyes from his book, and, without speaking, turned them slowly from the barbarian on horseback to the poor, abused peasant, bound before him. "Under the light," says the historian, "of that powerful gaze, the cords which tied his poor arms loosed of themselves, and the innocent victim of the proud

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oppressor stood upright and free, while the cruel Galla fell to the ground, trembling and beside himself, and there remained, at the feet of Benedict, begging the saint to pray for him. Without interrupting his reading, Benedict called to the brothers to carry the fainting Goth into the monastery and give him some blessed bread. When he had come to himself, the abbot told him how unjust, how cruel he had been, and exhorted him to act differently for the future."

But a greater man than the savage Galla was subdued by the holy grandeur of our saint. Totila, the greatest conqueror of his times, after his great victories, made a march of triumph through Italy, and when on his way to Naples, seized with a desire to see this Benedict, who was everywhere called a prophet, he turned aside to Monte Cassino, and sent word to Benedict that he would visit him. The saint answered that he would be welcome. But Totila, wishing to prove if he was really the prophet that he was called, dressed the captain of his guard in the royal robes and purple boots, which were the marks of royalty, gave him a numerous escort commanded by the three counts who usually guarded his own person, and then told him to present himself to the abbot as the king. The moment St. Benedict saw the captain, thus dressed like the king, he said, "My son, put off the dress you wear; it is not yours." The officer threw himself on the ground, terrified at having tried to deceive such a man. Neither he nor his escort dared to approach the abbot, but went back at full speed to the king, to tell him how

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immediately their base trick had been discovered. Totila himself then climbed the steep mountain on which the monastery stood; but when he reached the top, and saw from a distance the abbot, seated, and waiting for him, the conqueror of the Romans, and the master of Italy, was afraid. He dared not go forward, but threw himself on his face before this servant of Christ. Benedict said to him, three times, "Rise." But at last, seeing his fear, the monk rose from his seat and raised him up. During this interview Benedict reproved him for all his wrong-doing and told him what would happen to him; all of which came to pass. The king was deeply moved, and begging his prayers he left him; but not without carrying away with him a wholesome lesson for all his future life. Although victorious he was never again cruel, and his barbarian nature was changed.

St. Benedict founded his monastery at Monte Cassino in the forty-eighth year of his age, or in 529. The visit of king Totila took place in 543, the year before the death of St. Benedict, who forsaw all the terrible ruin that would come upon his country from the barbarians, and that would finally sweep over his dear children of Monte Cassino. He was found one day, by a noble friend, weeping at the coming sorrows that God had revealed to him.

During all these long years of which you have been reading, there was one person who was as dear to St. Benedict as his own soul. When he left Rome, and while he was hidden in that cave among the rocks of

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Subiaco; when he left this dear retreat and took up his abode on that mountain overlooking the river and the woods and, far beyond all these, the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea—during all this time he never forgot his beloved sister, his twin sister Scholastica, born on the same day as himself and with whom he had passed his most innocent childhood. One day, after he had settled his monastery on that rocky height, this sister climbed up the steep ascent of Monte Cassino, and the stone is still shown to visitors where this dear sister stopped to rest, stopped to take breath before she hastened on to see this beloved brother.

You may have heard wonderful stories of twins, who have been not only very much attached to each other, but have always done the same things at the same time, even when at great distances from each other; if one is sick, the other is sure to be sick, too; and I have in my mind's eye, twins who have entered the novitiate of a religious house together. Such persons are twins in mind and heart, as well as by the fact of having been born on the same day, of the same mother. St. Benedict and St. Scholastica seem to have been united in this mysterious manner, for we are told of St. Scholastica that she became a nun, quite as soon as St. Benedict became a monk. After St. Benedict had established his community at Monte Cassino, St. Scholastica came, with her nuns, to Plombariola, five miles south of her brother's monastery; and, following the same rule, the brother and sister ran side by side the race of Christian perfection.

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After so many sorrows, so many persecutions, so many and so great labors, what consolation must not St. Benedict have enjoyed in this near neighborhood to a sister so dear, so perfectly one with himself; and St. Scholastica—what joy, what safety, what increase of devotion, must she not have found in this neighborhood to a brother so holy, so wise, and so faithful to her best interests! Yet they seldom met; so seldom that you might think they cared very little for one another; but those who love each other as Benedict and Scholastica loved each other, are not weaned by absence; they enjoy knowing that they are near one another, breathing the same air, seeing the same sky, the same mountains and valleys, and, above all, living under one rule and plan of life. They may not see each other, but they make each other happy for all that. Once a year, only, Benedict and Scholastica left their convents, each with a companion, to meet in a house at a short distance from the monastery. Here they would spend the whole day together, talking of what lay nearest the hearts of both, God, virtue, heaven; and in this sweet and holy intercourse the hours passed swiftly until the sun told them it was time to return to their convents, when they would tranquilly separate, to walk more carefully than ever before, the narrow path to heaven. Lovely affection, uniting so closely and so tenderly these holy souls, without once turning their eyes or their wills from God, to whom they owed the first and the last beat of their hearts! Shall we not ask them to obtain for us,

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by their prayers, the same tranquil and holy affection for our nearest and dearest friends; so loving them as not to forget God; so loving each other as to help each other to love Him supremely to whom we, of right, belong! St. Francis de Sales tells us that "Our hearts should be clean as ivory, cleaving to nothing." It is when we cleave to our friends rather than to God, that our best friends become snares. It is the loving God above all things, that prevents this great mistake.

St. Gregory, who wrote the life of this brother and sister, has given an account of the last visit which St. Scholastica paid to St. Benedict at their place of meeting. They had passed the day as usual in heavenly conversation, such as angels might have shared; had sung together the psalms for the "Canonical hours," and sat down to their simple evening repast. When it was over, St. Scholastica, foreknowing, it may be, that this would be their last visit together in this world, or wishing for some further instruction or consolation, asked her brother to remain all night, and they would spend it as they had already spent the day, in conversing upon heavenly things and praising God. St. Benedict, unwilling to break the rule of the monastery which forbade the monks to spend a night outside the gates, unless on a journey, asked her not to press this affectionate request. Scholastica, finding him resolved to return home, laid her joined hands upon the table, bowed her head on them, and, with many tears, begged of Almighty God to grant her this desire of her heart. Her prayer was scarcely ended,

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the silent wish of this loving and beloved sister had but pierced the Heavens, when there broke from the peaceful sky such a storm of wind and rain, thunder and lightning, that neither St. Benedict nor his companion could set foot out of doors. Knowing that this sudden storm must have come in answer to some prayer of his sister's, he complained to her gently, saying, "God forgive you, sister; what have you done?" She replied, "I asked a favor of you, my brother, and you refused it; I asked the same favor of God, and He granted it to me."* St. Benedict was no longer unwilling to stay, for he saw that it was the will of God that he should do so; and they spent the whole night in delightful conversation, chiefly on the felicity of the saints in heaven; of the angels and archangels, the cherubim and seraphim who stand forever before the face of the Father, and of the Queen of angels and of saints, who sits within the glory that surrounds her Divine Son; these made up the subjects of their conversation, with a filial and pious remembrance of their good parents and ancestors who had gone before them

*The house in which St. Benedict and St. Scholastica were accustomed to meet is now a chapel. The bed of a brook, dry in summer, lies between the chapel and the monastery; but the sudden rains which fall in this region, often, in a few minutes, fill the dry bed of the brook and send a fierce current between the chapel and the monastery, even overflowing the banks, and making it impossible to ford the stream. It was such a storm that followed the prayer of St. Scholastica. These interesting facts, with many others showing the veneration still felt at Monte Cassino for every spot associated with the memory of St. Benedict, were told to me by Father B——, a Benedictine monk who had lived, for many years, in this celebrated monastery.

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into the eternal world, and to the enjoyment of those delights for which they longed more than the children of the world long for its most costly pleasures. How quickly must the midnight have come, and the hours for the Divine Office, which they recited together, and how quickly, too, the cool grey dawn must have looked in upon the room where they sat, and which was the signal for them to break off this happy meeting! With the morning they parted, and three days after St. Scholastica died; died before the joy of that last meeting with her saintly brother had faded from her heart, before the tones of his voice had ceased to vibrate, like the echoes of some strain of holy music, on her ears. Can we not believe that the desire she felt to prolong the visit, a desire so tender and so strong that it was noticed by God, and indulged, can we not believe that this desire came from some feeling that it would be their last on earth? Nor will it seem very strange, after these wonders that we have been reading about, if St. Benedict was allowed to know of the death of his sister before the messenger could be sent to Monte Cassino. We have all of us heard of the death of some friend at a distance from us, and, looking back, we have perhaps found that at the very moment this dear friend was breathing his last breath we were engaged in all sorts of worldly plans, gaities and enjoyments; and we may have felt shocked that we could have been so insensible as not to feel something in the very air which would have told us our dear friend was dying. But what is denied to the

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fondest natural affection, God often grants to the saints who have left all their friends to follow Him. At the very moment St. Scholastica was giving up her soul to God, St. Benedict, rapt in religious contemplation in his convent on Monte Cassino, had his eyes supernaturally opened to see the soul of his sister ascending to heaven in the shape of a white dove. "Filled with joy at her happy passage from earth to heaven," as we are told, he gave thanks for it to God and declared her death to his brethren; he also sent some of his monks to bring her body to Monte Cassino, and ordered the tomb which he had prepared for himself to be opened to receive her dear remains, that even in the grave their dust should not be divided.

The death of St. Scholastica was the signal for the death of her brother, the patriarch of his Order, one of the shining lights of that distracted century. The great St. Benedict died only forty days after seeing, in a vision, the soul of his sister ascending to God. It would seem as if their holy conversation on the joys of heaven had loosed the only tie that bound St. Scholastica to earth, and that her brother, on seeing her ascending to it, had no longer any hold on mortal things, but was free to follow her celestial flight. He foretold his death to several of his monks then at a distance from Monte Cassino. A violent fever seized him, and on the sixth day of his fever he asked to be carried into the chapel of St. John Baptist. He had already ordered the tomb in which his sister was lying to be opened. In the presence of that open tomb, and

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before the altar, he received the Holy Viaticum, and then, placing himself at the side of the tomb and at the foot of the altar, with his arms raised towards heaven, he died, standing, while murmuring a last prayer. Can you imagine anything more grand than such a death for a saint like Benedict!

He was buried by the side of his sister Scholastica, in a tomb made on the very spot where the heathen altar to Apollo stood, which he had persuaded the pagans to pull down. The feast of St. Scholastica is kept on the 10th of February; that of St. Benedict on the 21st of March.

From the Düsseldorf prints, of which I shall often speak, I have selected one representing the last interview between St. Benedict and St. Scholastica. You will see the lamp, as it swings from the ceiling, casting a halo of light on the head of the venerable abbot, whose raised hand is pointing heavenward as he speaks of the joys of Paradise. The young monk who stands behind him, and the aged nun who accompanied Scholastica, are devout listeners; while before him is his sister, rapt in an ecstacy of joy by his words, her eyes carried, by his heavenly discourse, beyond even her saintly brother to Him who is the King of saints, as He is their everlasting delight. At the upper corners of this picture are two very small ones; that on the right hand representing St. Benedict alone, in contemplation; that on the left hand representing him kneeling beside St. Scholastica on her bier, her hand pressing the crucifix to her bosom, while above her, in

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a stream of heavenly light, hovers a white dove. The spot on which St. Benedict was favored by this vision, is still shown in the upper room of one of the turrets of the monastery on Monte Cassino.

I have a rose bud and leaves gathered by a friend from the garden of St. Benedict's monastery at Subiaco. This garden is a sort of triangular plat of ground that stands out on the side of the rock a little in front of, and below, the grotto that sheltered St. Benedict. The rose has been plucked many years, but still keeps its graceful stem, and mild perfume, and, almost, its beauty of color. It is said, that while St. Benedict was still a youth at Subiaco, he overcame a great temptation by throwing himself into a hedge of rose bushes and rolling on this thorny bed until the infernal temptation had left him. Seven hundred years after, St. Francis of Assisi came, to visit the wild desert where Benedict received such graces, and prostrated himself before the thicket of thorns where the virtue of Benedict triumphed over the weakness of fallen nature. After bathing with his tears the soil of this battlefield of youthful virtue, he planted there two rose-trees. The roses of St. Francis grew, and have outlived the briars of St. Benedict, and from these rose-trees I think my rose bud came. After this example of courageous virtue, can any youth say it is impossible for him to keep his innocence?

You can tell which is St. Benedict, in pictures where many saints are represented, by a broken cup standing on his book, or by a serpent darting from it to commem-

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orate his miraculous escape from the attempts to poison him. The thorn-bush, too, is found in pictures of St. Benedict, to remind us how his virtue triumphed; and in a beautiful little picture by Perugino, in the gallery of the Vatican, Rome, he is seen with his monk's cowl over his head, and an asperges, or holy water sprinkler, in his hand, to symbolize his holiness of life.

I cannot close this sketch, my dear children, without giving you one of those facts by which history, even when written by those who scoff at the Church and her Orders of monks, gives testimony to the good which the world owes to this same Church and her despised monks.

When Rome, after being many times threatened by her barbarian enemies, was at last given over to them by the avenging justice of God, and was besieged, burned and plundered, no magnificence of her temples, no treasure of art, was of any more value in their eyes than a handful of dust. They set to work like demons, and the labors of thousands of years were distroyed in a few days. When they at last left the city to its fate, Rome was absolutely a desert. Rome, as it was when the innocent Agnes died at the hands of an executioner, would not have believed that such an awful punishment was in store for her. As she then drained the cup of wicked and cruel pleasures, so she was, afterwards, forced to drain the cup of retribution. During forty days not a human being stood within her vast boundary. Foxes made their holes in the palaces of her Cæsars, serpents crawled, unmolested, among

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her sumptuous baths ,and the banqueting halls of her nobles. Wild animals, no longer awed by the presence of man, came from the mountains and deserts of the neighborhood, and met the fierce beasts of India crawling out of their open dens under the Coliseum, prowling among its beautiful arches and gamboling at will on the floor of that amphitheatre where they had been trained, by a cruel nation, to sport with Christian victims, and thus make the frantic "Joy of a Roman holiday." Pagan Rome was dead, trampled on, utterly lifeless. God's judgments against her for these horrible cruelties had been fulfilled. But to Rome, unlike Babylon of old, had been given a priceless treasure, a sacred deposit; and this was the blood of Christian martyrs, and, especially, the blood of St. Peter and of St. Paul.

This blood was to be the seed of a new life. God had chosen the city of Rome for Himself, and for His Church, and He remembered mercy in the midst of justice. After forty days there was heard amid the awful silence of this "abomination of desolation"—not the cry of an army, not the huzzas of a multitude returning to take posession of their old homes, but the holy and peaceful chant of a religious procession, which had come, with prayers, and hymns, and penitential litanies, to take possession of the desolated city in the name of God and of His Church. That little band, my dear children, was a company of monks from the monasteries of St. Benedict! The kings of the world, the learned in art and science, left Rome

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to her fate; but the humble, laborious Benedictines, raising her up in the name of Jesus and his holy apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, poured oil into her wounds, and put wine to her lips, and Rome lived; lived no longer as pagan, but as Christian Rome! That we still have Rome, with her galleries of pictures and statues, her Pantheon dedicated to the worship of the true God, and even the naked pillars of her Forum preserved for the admiration of the world, that we still have her noble Christian Basilicas, her holy shrines, her martyr's relics, we owe, not to the deceitful powers of this world, nor to any wisdom of civil rulers nor of civil governments, but to the undying power of God in His Church. Remember this; and when ignorant or prejudiced men would make you believe that the Church, the Spouse of Christ, is the mother of darkness, not of light; of ignorance, not of knowledge; of barbarism, not of civilization; of slavery, not of freedom; you can remind them, that as the Rome of to-day, which they enjoy so much, is the foundling of the Church, supported in her arms, revived by her care, fostered by her magnanimity, so all the boasted learning of our age, the triumphs of civilization, the delights of literature, the majesty of sweet music, the wonders of art in architecture, sculpture, painting, and mosaic, have come to us, with Rome, through the Church and the successors of St. Peter.

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ST. DOROTHEA.

ON my table, lies a large, well-worn, worm-eaten copy of the Lives of the Saints. Beside this book, and almost as necessary to me, is a portfolio of pictures of the saints. Most of these pictures belong to a wonderfully beautiful series of religious prints, the "*Düsseldorf Series*," of which one may say, that not only the painters of such pictures must have been religious men, but also the engravers; so delicate, so expressive, so faithful is every line of flesh and drapery. One need not be a Catholic to linger with affection over these pictures; much less can one with a spark of devotion for martyrs, virgins, confessors, look quietly at them for a quarter of an hour, without feeling a sincere shame at one's mean love of one's self, in place of their generous, hearty love of God and their fellow creatures; or without begging of them, with a sigh of contrition, to obtain for one, by their sweet and prevailing prayers, more of that love of God and

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one's neighbor, which was, really, the secret of their being saints.

I am sometimes puzzled which of the saints in the worm-eaten book, or among the pictures in the black leather portfolio, to choose for my young readers, so admirable, so wonderful, so worthy of imitation in our humble way, are all the saints. The saint that I have selected for this month of February, is St. Dorothea, for she looks so lovely in the picture that I cannot resist the wish to tell you something about her. Then, too, she has that peculiar charm, that attraction, which belongs to a virgin martyr.

St. Dorothea was a young and beautiful girl in the city of Cæsarea, in the province of Cappadocia, Asia Minor. The Church in the early age in which St. Dorothea lived, did not approve, any more than the Church does now, of mixed marriages; that is, of a Catholic marrying an unbeliever. The young and beautiful Dorothea was a true Catholic, and a faithful child of the Church; therefore, when Theophilus, a rich and handsome young pagan, fell in love with her and wished to marry her, she excused herself, because he was a pagan and she was a Christian.

You will wonder, my dear children, how anyone pretending to love a good and beautiful girl, could, in one moment, become her cruel enemy; but this may convince you how little we can trust to the affection of those who love us only for themselves. No sooner did this pagan lover feel sure that Dorothea would not marry him, for all his beauty and riches, than he re-

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solved to be revenged upon her. It was very easy in those days of bloody persecution to be revenged upon any Christian, however noble or powerful he might be, or however innocent. The lover, now turned to hater, had only to tell Fabritius, the cruel and persecuting governor of Cæsarea, that Dorothea would neither marry a pagan nor sacrifice to the idols, because she was a Christian, to have her seized by a rough guard and taken to a dungeon, and then brought before the tribunal, or court, where the governor would ask her if she was a Christian.

You may be sure that when St. Dorothea, though so young, was asked this question by the governor, she did not hesitate, nor try to excuse herself for being one; but lifting her innocent face to heaven she thanked God that she was indeed a Christian, although knowing that for this alone she would be sentenced to some dreadful death—perhaps to be thrown to wild beasts, or to be stretched on a rack until she died from the torture of bones, and sinews, and nerves breaking all over her delicate body, or perhaps to be burned at the stake—all dreadful to think of! But while any, and all, of these might be her portion, the young maiden had not a thought of denying her Lord, her only lover and spouse. We are told that when the governor ordered her to be brought before him, she came with her mantle folded on her bosom and her eyes meekly cast down. The governor asked, "Who art thou?" and she replied, "I am Dorothea, a virgin, and a servant of Jesus Christ." He said, "Thou must serve

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our gods or die." She answered mildly, "Be it so; the sooner shall I stand in the presence of Him whom I most desire to behold." Then the governor asked her, "Whom dost thou mean?" She replied, "I mean the Son of God, Christ mine espoused! His dwelling is Paradise; by His side are eternal joys; and in His garden grow celestial fruits and roses that never fade."

Her eloquence and Christian loveliness so subdued the cruel governor, that he commanded her to be carried back to her dungeon; and, in order to overcome her holy fidelity to her Lord, he sent to her two sisters, named Calista and Christeta, who had once been Christians, but who, from terror of the torments with which they had been threatened, had denied their faith, had become apostates, were no longer of the one fold of Christ Jesus. The governor promised a large reward to these unhappy sisters, if they would persuade Dorothea to deny her faith, as they had done; and they, full of self-conceit, boldly entered her prison. But how different was the end of this visit from what all had expected! Instead of terrifying Dorothea with the picture of the torments that stood ready for her if she refused to offer incense to the gods of the pagans, they no sooner entered her cell than she began to reprove them, like one who had authority, and drew such a picture of the joys of heaven, which they had, in their weakness and cowardice, allowed to drop from their unworthy hands, that they fell at her feet, saying, "O blessed Dorothea, pray for us, that our cowardly

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sin may be forgiven and our repentance accepted!" And Dorothea did so, and they left the dungeon to proclaim aloud that they were Christians.

Then the governor, furious at such a result, commanded that the two sisters should be burned, and that Dorothea should stand by and see their torments. Very likely this cruel governor, who could be very brave when he was sending two helpless women to death by the hands of an armed guard, imagined that Dorothea would be as afraid of fire as he would be himself; for you may believe such people as Fabritius are very great cowards. But, although Dorothea knew that she would feel, herself, the very same torments, she not only stood by, but encouraged these sisters to suffer bravely for Christ, saying, "O my sisters, fear not! suffer to the end! for these short pains will be followed by eternal joys!" Thus encouraged by Dorothea they died, and the saint was condemned to be cruelly tortured, and then beheaded. The torture she endured with holy courage, and her execution —but before I tell you about that we must go back to the tribunal of Fabritius, the governor, and to Theophilus, who had brought upon Dorothea all these sufferings. He had stood in the court room while the governor was questioning Dorothea, and when she made that beautiful reply about her spouse, Jesus Christ, "By whose side are eternal joys, and in whose garden grow celestial fruits and roses that never fade;" and when they were leading her to execution whom should she see among the cruel rabble, waiting

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to see her suffer, but Theophilus, who taunted her with her refusal of him and with the revenge he had taken; and then added, in bitter mockery, "Ha! fair maiden, goest thou to join thy bridegroom? Send me, I pray thee, some of the fruits and flowers in his garden, of which you boasted to Fabritius; I would fain taste them!"

Perhaps some, I hope all, of my young readers feel sure they would never, even to save themselves from death, deny their holy religion; but few, I fear, can hear a school-fellow taunt or insult them for being Catholics, without a reddening of the cheek or a flash of the eye, or a proud and resentful answer. Yet it was exactly this grace, to bear an insult not only with meekness but with joy, which made our Dorothea fit to be a martyr for so meek a master as Jesus Christ. She remembered, remembered not only with her mind but with her heart, how the rabble insulted her Divine Master, her Celestial Spouse; how they blindfolded Him and spat upon Him; how they taunted Him on His way to Calvary; and, without one shade of anger, or even one look of pain, on her beautiful and open face, she looked upon Theophilus, inclined her head with a gentle smile, and said, "Within an hour I will send you apples from Paradise."

The guilty young man tried to utter a laugh of scorn and derision, but the laugh died away in his throat. He did not, as he intended, go to see Dorothea beheaded, but asked some of his pagan companions to go and eat and drink with him, hoping to drown the

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remorse which he felt coming over him for his wickedness to Dorothea. It was not an hour after this—St. Dorothea had not been an hour before the smiling face of her God, not an hour in the full joy of the Beatific Vision, which makes the rapture of angel and archangel, of saint and martyr, and of Mary our Blessed Mother—when a radiant youth entered the room where the young men sat feasting and rioting. The youth bore in his hand a dish of precious gold, curiously wrought, and in the dish were apples, more ruddy and more perfect than the young men had ever seen before; and, the wonder was, at that season no one had ever heard of apples in Cappadocia. The heart of Theophilus smote him, but he said boldly; "How is it that you bring us apples?" "The Christian martyr, Dorothea," said the shining one, "sends you these apples from Paradise."

The poor young pagan turned pale, deadly pale, and, leaving his companions to finish the feast, went directly to the governor who had, that very morning, condemned Dorothea, declared himself a Christian, and, before the sun set, he too was a martyr, and stood before God baptized in his own blood.

Dear children, as none of us have shared, or ever can share, the counsels of Almighty God, none of us can know what the future may have in store for us to suffer for Christ, for His Church, and for our dear old religion.

Among the converts to the same religion for which St. Dorothea died, was, several years ago, a young

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lady, who afterwards went with her brother, a rich Boston merchant, and his family to China. This gentleman was very fond of his sister, and loaded her with beautiful and costly presents. When, after two or three years, he was preparing to return to America, what was his surprise to hear his sister say, she had decided to remain in China as a Sister of Charity.

Once he would not have given his consent to her becoming a Sister of Charity anywhere; but now, in his distress, he said, "You shall be a Sister of Charity, only return with us to our friends; there I will give you land, a house; endow it; all you can wish for I will give; but return with me to Boston; there, if you wish, be a Sister of Charity."

But the heroic girl, hearing a voice, "In China I will have you serve me," much as she loved her brother, saw the ship bear him away to all she held dear on earth, and turned to her humble duty as a Sister of Charity among the idolaters of China. Often and often, when fearful tales come to my ears of martyrs in China, I think of the young Boston convert and Sister of Charity, and wonder if I shall ever hear her name among those of the Chinese martyrs. I am certain she would gladly suffer death for her Saviour; for, long before she was a Sister of Charity she had learned to bear insult with the meek joy of a St. Agnes or a St. Dorothea. God only knows if some young reader of these pages may not one day hear that same sweet voice of Jesus, saying, "As for thee, follow thou me," and you will follow Him, I am sure, if it

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be to the giving of your life to idolatrous China or Japan, or the Cannibal Islands of the South Sea; and it may be that on the list of martyrs will yet shine the name of some faithful little reader of this story of St. Dorothea, on whose feast-day priests will offer up the Holy Sacrifice in blood-red vestments, thanking God that America, and the United States, has given a martyr to Christ. This may all be; but one thing we know; all of us will have many taunts, and jeers, and calumnies, to bear for our holy faith. Let us learn to bear them with such a smile as St. Dorothea gave to her cruel lover and accuser, and we shall bear a testimony for God and for His truth, which God, and His truth-loving Church, will not forget.

I have taken out the picture of St. Dorothea to look at it once more. How tenderly, and how joyfully too, she looks out from the picture; her meek eyes raised to heaven, in her right hand is the palm she won with her virgin blood shed for Christ, in her left is a basket of apples with their fresh leaves, while at her side lies the sword by which she suffered, and triumphed. Dear, joyful St. Dorothea, pray for us!

St. Dorothea won her crown and palm as a virgin martyr, on the 6th day of February, 303 years after the birth of Christ, or one year before St. Agnes of Rome. She suffered under the same emperor, Dioclesian. Her body is kept in the celebrated church that bears her name, beyond the Tiber in Rome. She is spoken of in St. Jerome's martyrology, and St. Aldhelm, an

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English saint and doctor of the Church, writes the story of her martyrdom.

St. Justin has said, "We are slain with the sword, but we increase and multiply; the more we are persecuted and destroyed, the more are added to our numbers. As a vine, by being pruned and cut close, shoots forth new suckers, and bears more fruit, so it is with us."

Christianity is the same now as in the days of St. Justin, as in the days of St. Dorothea; let none of us try to escape our cross, or our martyrdom whether by word or by the sword.



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ST. JOSEPH.

SHALL we look over the Calendar, dear children, and find our saint for March? Many bright names shine on the page for this month. St. Francesca of Rome, whose life, as written by lady Fullerton, should be familiar to every child; her feast comes on the 9th of March; and on the 17th is the feast of St. Patrick, the apostle, not only of Ireland, but really of America. Yet, my dear children, I shall run the risk of disappointing some of you, indeed, very many, perhaps, and choose the saint whose feast comes two days later, on the 19th of March, and who is no other than St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and foster-father of Jesus Christ.

I could not tell you, in less than a large volume, all the reasons I have for wishing to interest you in St. Joseph; but I hope when you have read this brief tribute to that "model of all pure and humble souls," you will feel your hearts so drawn toward this just man, by your admiration for his virtues, that you will

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make it the study of your life to copy them, and that you will never allow one day of your life to come to an end without practising some regular devotion to St. Joseph.

A great many Protestants have said to me, "The Bible says very little about the Blessed Virgin; why is it that you Catholics speak of her so much?" Almost as often as this remark has been made to me, I have replied, was there ever, in all the books of the world, so much said of any woman as of the Blessed Virgin, in the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel? Of what other woman could it be said that an angel was sent to her, not only to tell her that she should bear a son, but, that this son should also be the Son of the Most High, the Emmanuel, or, "God with us," and the Messias who had been promised by God to to His people; and promised, not alone through His prophets, but, by His own mouth, to Adam and Eve before they were banished from the Garden of Eden? Of what other woman was it ever prophesied, as it was of the Blessed Virgin, that all these things should come to pass? It is not the number of pages written about a person which makes us esteem him; it is rather the lofty excellence and merit of the facts of his life. Many larger books than all the Four Gospels put together, containing, as they do, the greatest and most important facts of the life of our Lord, have been written about very ordinary people; and more pages, a hundred thousand times over, have been written about these Four Gospels, than they contain; which

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proves what I have said, that it is not the number of pages, nor of chapters, nor of volumes, written about a person, which tells whether he is truly great or not, but the grandeur and excellence of the events of his life. In this sense we may truly say that a great deal has been said in the Bible about the Blessed Virgin, and about her spouse, St. Joseph.

The evangelist tells us, in a few words, that St. Joseph was a descendent of David, that greatest of all the kings of Judah; the sweet Psalmist of Israel; and, also, a saint, who was not contented with being a saint himself, but has done more than any other poet in the world, to help others to become saints. It was from such a royal house as the house of David, that our meek friend, St. Joseph, was descended.

You have all listened very sharply, when your father and mother, and other friends, speaking of some person whom you know, have said that he was the son, or grandson, or nephew, of some very distinguished man; and if a descendent of some of those noble Catholic kings, of whom you have all read so much, were to come to this country and settle down in your neighborhood, what a peculiar respect you would feel for him. He might not be any richer than his neighbors, he might even be poorer than most of them, but he would have a claim on your regard, such as no mere riches could give, for he would possess what money cannot buy, a drop of the blood of a noble Christian sovereign running through his veins; and, if any one were to write the life of this neighbor,

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one of the first things he would say, would be, that he was "descended from such or such a distinguished, or virtuous, king or prince;" and you would think a great deal had been told in these few words. But certainly, no more could be said of one's lineage than what St. Matthew said of St. Joseph, that "he was of the house of David;" and St. Matthew even takes the trouble to tell the name of every one of his ancestors, so far back as Abraham.

The second great fact, mentioned by St. Luke as well as by St. Matthew, is, that St. Joseph was espoused to a virgin whose name was Mary; and in the same breath we are told that to this virgin came the angel Gabriel, from his shining place before the throne of God, to make known to her the glorious part she was to take in the redemption of the world. Yet this part was not forced upon her; she was not obliged to become the mother of the Messiah; but the angel paused, after he had told her of the great honor intended for her, until she should give her consent. To such a wife had Joseph been espoused; and is not this a great deal to say of any man however honorable in himself?

But although Mary had given her consent to be the Mother of the world's Redeemer, God did not forget His faithful servant, St. Joseph, who had respected the desire of his holy wife, the Virgin Mary, to remain always a virgin, dedicated to God. Observe, God did not forget St. Joseph; but when He found that St. Joseph was troubled by events which he could not

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understand, He sent an angel to him in his sleep, who said, "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she will bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." I think every one of my young readers will say that this one event, is, of itself, enough to make any person's history a very interesting one, even if told in a few words.

If you dwell a moment, on this wonderful story of the marriage of the Blessed Virgin and of St. Joseph, and of the Incarnation of the Son of God, which took place under the humble roof of St. Joseph, you will realize how great a trust was committed to St. Joseph by the Lord of Heaven and of earth. For, not only was the Immaculate Virgin put under his care, but God Himself, the Second Person of the most Holy Trinity, took refuge in this good man's home.

If one of your friends, my dear children, should be appointed by the government of the United States as the guardian of some great treasure, like the public papers, such as the treaties between this nation and other nations, or the boundary lines between this and neighboring countries, you would say that it was a great honor to have such a trust put into his hands; and if, after his death, it should be written of him that not only was this trust committed to him, but that he fulfilled it most faithfully, you would say, "This is better than volumes of empty praise; this is a fact that speaks louder than words." We shall now see how

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St. Joseph fulfilled the unheard of trust committed to his care.

We read that when the decree of Cæsar was made known, which commanded the tribes of the Hebrew nation to go, each to its own city, to have every name enrolled, in order that the Roman Emperor might be able to tax every Jew in Judea, Joseph, obedient to the laws of man, took his innocent and beloved wife with him to Bethlehem. It was winter, and we can imagine the distress of St. Joseph in being obliged to expose Mary to such hardships. But what must not that distress have been when he found "no room for them in the inns" of Bethlehem! Every room, and every corner, had been taken up; and the only place of shelter which they could find was a stable, where the ox and the ass had a claim even before themselves. It was here that the Son of God was born, and His crib was the rough manger with the hay and the straw for a bed and a pillow.

We can, perhaps, imagine how cheerless and uncomfortable that stable must have seemed to this tenderly attached pair, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, not only for each other, but for that celestial Being who had chosen them as His protectors; but we cannot imagine the joy, nor the glory, exceeding all human rapture and magnificence, which filled that lowly stable on the night of the Nativity, which every Christmas celebrates, and, next to the Virgin Mother herself, St. Joseph was the first one who ever took the Holy Infant into his arms.

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My dear children, let us pause a moment, and consider what it was to receive into his arms, to hold on his breast, to caress with a venerating, worshipful tenderness, beyond any affection that a father can ever bestow upon a child, the Incarnate Son of God! We can never hope to describe this happiness, this beatitude; still less to express it fully in our poor, cold words, our forms of mortal speech; but we can imagine something of it, especially you, happy child, who have been admitted to your first Communion. Remember, when the privilege of receiving Holy Communion is again granted you, that you are favored, more intimately than even St. Joseph, with the immediate presence of your Saviour and your God, and humble yourself profoundly under a grace so little deserved.

If we followed the simple gospel narrative, (remember—I am telling you nothing which every one does not read in his Bible), we find that St. Joseph was with the Blessed Virgin when she received the visit of the shepherds, on the very night of our Saviour's birth, and when the three wise kings came, with their gold, frankincense, and myrrh, to adore the King of kings, and the source of all wisdom; and he was also her companion when she presented her Divine Son in the Temple, as all the Hebrew mothers were commanded to do. Nothing can be such a rebuke to our spirit of disobedience, our wish to escape every obligation, as this act of pure obedience to the law of their nation, on the part of the Blessed Virgin and of

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St. Joseph. They might well have considered themselves excused from keeping such a law, intended for very different persons from themselves; but, instead, we see them going up to the temple with the simple offering allowed to the poor, which was two turtle doves. But although they came, so humbly, and so quietly, into the temple, doing nothing to attract attention, not even displaying the Divine Infant which must have made all other infants seem, suddenly, to lose their beauty, two persons were waiting for them, had been waiting for them many a long year. St. Luke tells us that "when His parents brought in the child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the law," Simeon, who had come, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, into the temple, met them, took the Infant into his arms, and blessed God, saying, "Now, O Lord dost thou dismiss Thy servant in peace;" with the rest of that beautiful anthem which the Church takes good care that we shall all remember. St. Joseph also heard that prophecy of sorrow concerning the Blessed Virgin, when Simeon said, in the midst of great promises, "And a sword shall pierce thine own soul;" and we can understand how it must have given a still deeper tenderness to his love for Mary, to know that sorrows were to be her portion, sorrows from which even his love could not save her. And not only was Simeon inspired to go to the temple on that day, but also Anna, the devout prophetess, who declared the little Jesus to be the Messias, and "spoke of Him to all who looked for the redemption

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of Israel." St. Luke tells us that both the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were filled with a holy and devout wonder at these events.

But the sorrow and the joy of the presentation in the temple, were still fresh in their hearts, when another of those great events, which were crowded into their lives, took place. If you turn to the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, you will see how cunning a trap the wicked Herod thought he had laid for the baby Messias, the promised King of the Jews, who, he fancied, would turn him and his family from the throne. He charged the three wise kings to return to him, and tell him where he should find this little king, that "he too might adore him;" whereas he only wished to destroy him. Can you think of anything more horrible than such a feeling toward any little infant, and above all to the infant whom Herod, with all the Jewish nation, had been expecting for thousands of years! And all for the sake of a few years of empty pomp as a king! But the evangelist tells us that the wise men were warned by God in a dream, not to return to this wicked Herod, and thus for a time he seemed cheated of his prey. But the sinful purpose, once indulged, never sleeps. The more Herod thought about this little infant, the more he hated it and the more he determined to kill it. He therefore ordered all the male children of two years old and under, to be murdered! When this dreadful order was put forth, who could suppose the helpless infant in the stable of Bethlehem would escape? But that angel who had already

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visited Joseph in his peaceful slumber, was again sent to him, to tell him, "Take the young child and his mother and fly into Egypt, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." St. Joseph had become accustomed to the visits of angels; he knew their voices; he was not afraid to obey them; nor did he wait for morning, but roused the Blessed Virgin gently from her light sleep, told her of the command given to him by the angel, and, without a moment's hesitation, made ready his meek, but sure-footed ass, to carry the Lord of Heaven and earth, and his Immaculate Mother, into the land of Egypt. How many persons whom you know, and very good persons too, would do like St. Joseph, leave behind him country, friends, all his affairs, to carry the Son of the Most High, far away from the wicked plottings of the very men He came to redeem? Almost every body leaves God to take care of Himself, instead of owning, with devout gratitude, that He has allowed us to take care of some of His dearest interests, and, especially of His dearest treasure, which is no other than His own beloved Son. St. Joseph, however, was noble enough to believe that God's interests were his interests, God's safety his safety, God's affairs his affairs, and, moreover, that he could not have any interests, nor any affairs, important enough to make him neglect those which belonged to God.

There are few pictures, in the world, more touching than those which represent this Flight into Egypt. Sometimes the Holy Family is seen sitting under a

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palm tree, the Infant resting on the lap of His Mother, and angels adoring Him; while St. Joseph is leaning on his staff, and contemplating, as he might well do, this happy group. A cave is still shown in which they once took refuge on this long journey, made without any of those conveniences which are thought necessary for a mother and her little infant. Innumerable pretty and touching legends, also, are told of this Flight into Egypt, so that poetry and art owe some of their loveliest flowers to this flight from a murderous king. But, as I wish to confine myself to what the Bible tells us of St. Joseph, I shall leave these legends for another time, or for you to read when you are old enough to consult more learned books.

For seven years, then, or until the death of Herod, St. Joseph was a willing exile from his native land. For seven miserable years on a throne, Herod had been willing to kill hundreds and hundreds of innocent little ones, and, in intention, to kill the Messias of his nation! But after all he was obliged to die; and the little one, safe with His Virgin Mother and St. Joseph, in the land of Egypt, was brought, at the command of an angel, and by the same careful hands, to Nazareth. The meek descendent of the royal house of David returned, as promptly as he had departed, at the word of this angel; returns to his country, to the little town of Nazareth, to the humble cottage where the mystery of the Incarnation had taken place, and to his trade as a carpenter; and, in his workshop is the Child Jesus.

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If we think it a privilege to live in the same house with a very learned or wise person, remember with whom St. Joseph lived intimately for thirty years. There are few pictures more attractive than those which place before us the boy, Jesus, in the workshop of St. Joseph. He helps His foster-father saw the heavy timbers, planes the thin boards, picks up the sticks and shavings that nothing may be wasted, and performs, with the most winning sweetness, all those small labors which so many children consider hard or disagreeable, and, perhaps they are even so proud as to think, degrading. To such children I would say, look long and often at the frontispiece of this volume, and you will soon be ashamed of your selfish, dainty indolence.

We will read a little further in our Bibles, dear children. The evangelist, St. Luke, tells us how Jesus, when He was twelve years old, went up to the temple at Jerusalem with His parents, and, purposely remaining there after they had left it in order to return to Nazareth, He was sought by them with the greatest agony of anxiety, and found, on the third day, disputing with the learned doctors of the Jewish law. When Mary sees her beloved son, she forgets everything in her maternal devotion, and says, "Son, why hast Thou done so to us; thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." You see, my dear children, how the Blessed Virgin urges, as one of her most affectionate reproaches, that He has given anxiety to St. Joseph. How tenderly this sounds through the 1857 years

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since it was spoken—"Thy father and I have sought Thee, sorrowing." I think you will never again, my dear children, feel that it makes no difference with Jesus and with Mary how you treat St. Joseph. I think, indeed, I am certain, that they are very much hurt when dear St. Joseph is at all neglected; and, on the contrary, are very much pleased—take it, even, as a respect paid to themselves—when St. Joseph is honored, or in any way noticed.

We must not take this affectionate complaint of the Blessed Virgin to her Son, on finding Him in the temple, as a reproof. So far from this, it was only her sorrowful way of showing her adoring affection for Him. Many of the saints have indulged in these fond complaints to Jesus, when they have been deprived of His dear society, or of the consolations which they generally receive from Him. At such times they say affectionately reproachful things to Jesus, and tell Him how much they have suffered from His absence; and our Lord has made known, to several of the saints, how much He prizes these fond complaints of His dear friends. How could the Blessed Virgin have said anything to Jesus which would tell Him how much, or rather how infinitely, she loved Him, better than, "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." Try, my dear children, to have tender, affectionate ways with your sweetest of friends, Jesus. Do not act as if He were only a very slight acquaintance, or a friend very seldom seen; but treat Him as your dearest, your nearest,

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your most intimate of all friends. The stiff, stately way people have towards Jesus, does not come from love; but, from the want of it. Jesus never complains of the familiarity of His friends—their loving, tender familiarity—but of their neglect, their forgetfulness, their cold, hard, selfish way of loving Him. Jesus understood His dear mother; and her tender reproach was sweeter to His ears than the unloving, whispered praise of the proud doctors of the law.

After this touching scene in the temple, we are told that Jesus returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, "and was subject to them." What a lesson, my dear children, in that docility with which a child should be subject to the will of its parents! How many boys and girls grow proud, and impatient of control, as soon as they find themselves growing tall, or strong, or handsome! Is it not mortifying to think that children, after having been nursed, and tended through all the sicknesses and helplessness of infancy and childhood, should use their first reason, and strength, and improvement of every sort, in resisting the wish, the will, and the command of their parents? As much as to say, you may take care of me when I cannot take care of myself; you may nurse me when nobody else will take the trouble to do so; you can support me, feed and clothe, and educate me, because if you do not, no one will; but, as soon as I can, I will disobey you, please myself, and act according to my own ideas. Is not this very shocking when put into words? But it is more shocking to see it acted before one's eyes,

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every day of the year, by some proud, perverse, unhappy child.

From the time of this return to Nazareth and the peace of its dear cottage, St. Joseph is not spoken of in the Four Gospels. But the Church, the Mother of the gospels, and of the epistles, and, ever since they were written, their faithful guardian and wise interpreter, has preserved many precious traditions concerning this highly favored saint. St. John tells us at the end of his gospel, that the whole world would not contain the books that could be written about Jesus of Nazareth; and we must therefore conclude, that we are to go to the same fountain from which the gospels flowed, that is, the Church, for whatever has been left unsaid or unwritten in her sacred books. Let us, then, take our places, like good children, at the knee of our divinely instructed Mother, the Church of God, who has not only books, written and printed books, for us to read, but has her memory stored with the choicest recollections, the most endearing reminiscences, which she guards as a holy deposit. Where is the child who could forget its parents, its nurse, its early playmates? No more could the Church, with her supernatural memory, forget her Lord and Master, His Blessed Mother or His foster-father St. Joseph.

We have now come to *our* part of the veneration due to St. Joseph. If we wish to know how much we ought to love him, how much we ought to venerate him, let us go, first to Nazareth, then to the stable of Bethlehem, and to Egypt during those seven years of

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exile, and again to Nazareth during the peaceful, hidden life of our dear Lord in the home of St. Joseph. Let us see how he was loved, how he was esteemed, by Him who knew what was in the hearts of men, and who is to be, one day, the Judge, and the everlasting reward, of that just man, St. Joseph. If we do this, my dear children, instead of fearing that we shall esteem, and venerate, and love St. Joseph too much, we shall be very much ashamed that one, who was so highly honored by Jesus Christ, has been treated with so little respect by us.

The first and best way to honor St Joseph, is to imitate his virtues; his uprightness, his fidelity to the trust confided to him by God, his readiness to obey every command of God, no matter how much trouble it might cost him. These are great virtues, and to practice them we are often obliged to make a great effort; but if we persevere, as St. Joseph did, we shall gain that most excellent of all habits—the habit of virtue. Let us, also, be humble like St. Joseph; pure and innocent like St Joseph; devout like St. Joseph; which means, simply, the loving God above all things, as St. Joseph did. This is the honor which St. Joseph likes to receive, and to obtain the grace to honor St. Joseph in this manner, let us try some of those simple ways so well known to pious people.

We all believe in the intercession of saints; let us, then, be sure to ask St. Joseph to pray for us, that we may obtain those graces, and practice those virtues, which made him so dear to the heart of Jesus.

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St. Joseph is the special patron of all priests. The life of this holy spouse of an Immaculate Virgin, and the protector of Jesus while a child upon earth, is considered the model which is to be copied by those who handle the adorable Body of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; and, that they may be able to copy his life, there are special prayers, by which priests, before and after mass, implore the intercession of St. Joseph. Remember, then, that the first simple way to make sure of the help of St. Joseph, is *to ask* for it.

You will never see a nun, or a sister of any Order, who has not a profound respect for St. Joseph, and a very great and sincere confidence in his prayers. A venerable Sister of Charity told me, only a few days ago, that three hospitals had been given to them immediately after the novena to St. Joseph which they always make before his feast. "I know where a hospital is sadly needed," some one said, on hearing the sister tell this; "can you not move the hearts of some of these rich people around us to give, at least, the ground for a hospital?" "Wait until after the Feast of St. Joseph," was her reply.

I should hardly dare to tell you how many convents, schools, asylums for every sickness of soul and body, have been started, and carried on successfully, among really poor Catholics, under the protection of St. Joseph. And not only priests, and nuns, but all persons sincerely devoted to St. Joseph, and humble in their wishes, will find St. Joseph ready to help them in all their necessities. St. Joseph was himself a poor

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man. He was not a merchant-prince, who could buy pearls, and precious stones, either to sell again or to give to his spouse, the Blessed Virgin; he kept neither horses nor chariots; he had no servants, neither did he live on dainty food. He was a carpenter, and worked patiently at his trade. We cannot, therefore, expect St. Joseph to obtain a life of indolence and luxury for us; but we may expect him to pray that all our necessities will be supplied, and that we shall be able to pay all our just debts This humble life of St. Joseph, of the Blessed Virgin, and of our Divine Lord, ought to make us ashamed to ask St. Joseph for riches and luxuries, as I have said; but we can ask him to give us a home as comfortable as he had himself; and to add to his own comforts what will be good for us. Many persons are disappointed because St. Joseph does not make them prosperous in their business, which means that they shall make a great deal of money. Remember that money and prosperity are, sometimes, very bad for all of us; but straitness and humility are very wholesome. The spirit of the Holy Family in the cottage at Nazareth was a very humble spirit, and unless we have this spirit we certainly cannot expect St. Joseph to help us—help us, perhaps, to ruin our souls. But I must tell you how St. Joseph did, really, build a house for one of his friends. This person had long been asking St. Joseph to assist her in finding a little house of her own, a home humble but peaceable. She had no money to buy nor to build this little home, but she still believed that, if it were best for her to have

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it, it would be provided for her. A Sister of Mercy said to her one day, "St. Joseph will not only build your little house, but he will furnish it." The prediction of the good cheery sister, came true, and in a way that astonished even those who had a sincere faith in the prayers of St. Joseph. Would you not think this person utterly ungrateful if she could ever forget this, or, if she could ever fail to make known to others how much St. Joseph will do for his friends, for his sincere and affectionate friends? And, would you not also think it very ungrateful in her, if she should, by and by, complain that St. Joseph did not give her a larger house? The spirit of the Holy Family was a very humble and contented spirit, and those who expect St. Joseph to help them, must have this same humility and contentment, which made the Holy Family so happy in their home among the hills of the little town of Nazareth.

There is one more necessity in which we must try to have St. Joseph for our special friend and patron; and, this is, our extreme necessity at the hour of death. The friend who can help us in that awful hour is indeed a friend to honor and to love. The gospels do not tell us that St, Joseph died; but I suppose no one doubts that he did die. The gospels do not tell us that he died before our Lord was crucified; but we have no reason to think that He would have left the Blessed Virgin to the care of St. John, had St. Joseph been still living. The Church, as I have said before, has a memory for all these blessed facts, and she tells us that

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St. Joseph died a most peaceful and happy death, attended by Jesus and Mary. What a calm and holy death must not that have been! The Blessed Virgin near him to give him the help of her prayers, and his foster-son—who was also his Creator, and whom he had protected and supported by his hard labor during His infancy—holding him in His omnipotent arms! In return for such a happy death, St. Joseph is ready to ask the same holy privilege for us, of having Jesus and Mary beside us at our last hour; and, whether on our beds, in our own homes, among our beloved friends, or among strangers, or on the broad wintry ocean, or alone in the deep forests, St. Joseph will then come, and bring with him Jesus and Mary to be our unspeakable comfort. Therefore we are taught to say often, "Jesus! Mary! Joseph!" to make sure of a happy death; and no sweeter ejaculations can sound in the ears of the dying than these:

"Jesus! Mary! Joseph! I give you my heart, my soul, my life!

"Jesus! Mary! Joseph! assist us in our last agony!

Jesus! Mary! Joseph! grant that we may die in peace in your holy company.'

Overbeck has drawn a number of pictures, illustrating the life of St. Joseph, and the one representing his death would make any Christian wish to die under his patronage; to lead, if need be, a life as humble and laborious as that which St. Joseph led, if its end could be as peaceful and as sure of heaven. The frontispiece of this volume is taken from these illustra-

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tions of the life of St. Joseph by Overbeck, and represents the interior of the Holy House of Nazareth. St. Joseph is busy with his joiner's tools; the young Jesus, with a face of heavenly contentment, is sweeping up the shavings scattered on the floor, while the Blessed Virgin, just entering the room, looks at her son with a gesture of worship, as well as of love and admiration at His humility. Below this picture I have placed one from Correggio, as a *predella*, or pendant picture, representing St. Joseph holding the Divine Infant in his arms, as he must so often have done, with a rapture surpassing all the joy that a parent can feel in caressing his most beloved child. It is a rapture like that of the good priest, when he holds in his hands the consecrated Host, and adores it with unutterable devotion; a silent rapture which makes him willing to give up all other privileges for this—the privilege of calling Jesus down to the altar, holding Him in his hands and offering Him up as a sacrifice for himself and his people! The good priest may meet with many sorrows and crosses, many hardships and disappointments; but so long as he has this privilege he can well afford to leave sceptres to kings, great nations to their rulers, armies to their generals, and navies to their admirals. He may be despised by men, but he is powerful with God; and all the happiness of the world, in comparison with it, is but as a little clay.

I told you, my dear children, that I had so many reasons for wishing to interest you in St. Joseph, that a volume would not contain them if written down.

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I have one very special reason, however; which is, to have every one of my readers repeat, once, the ejaculations I have given above to obtain a happy death, for an intention so near to my heart, so necessary to its happiness, that, after my own salvation, none can be so near. Can any child refuse me this favor?



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ST. FRANCIS DE PAULA.

ON the second day of April, the Church honors the holy confessor, St. Francis de Paula, founder of the reformed Franciscan Order of the Minims. Francis was born about the year 1416, at Paola, or Paula, a little city in Calabria, Italy, between Naples and Reggio. His parents though very poor, were industrious, and happy in their humble condition, directing their whole lives to the one purpose of serving God faithfully. They did not say, like so many people, "We will get rich, and then we will serve God with our riches; we will then build churches and be kind to the poor; at present it will not do to be too pious." O, no! the parents of our saint said always, "We will serve God now; we will be pious and devout now; we will be charitable now, dividing our slender means with fellow creatures poorer than ourselves."

The reward which this humble pair received, for thus loving God and serving Him faithfully, would not, perhaps, be coveted by many people who are

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called good, but it was one which they prized above all consolations, for God gave them a saint for a son. This son was given to them after many prayers, and, as his parents believed, at the intercession of St. Francis of Assisi for whom he was named; and he was consecrated to God from his birth.

Many parents, even pious ones, would say, if they had but one child, and that a son, "God does not ask us to make such a sacrifice; if we had two sons we might give one to God; but this only one we must keep for the consolation and support of our old age, or to bear up the family name." All this may be very well, but humble James Martotille and his wife did what was far better, far nobler, far more magnanimous; they gave their only child, and that a son, to God, to serve him as a poor religious. This showed the generous quality of their love for God; and, while we blame none who keep their only children for themselves, we cannot but admire these parents, who could so far rise above the affections of nature. They did not love their son less than other parents love their sons, only they loved God a great deal more. And how strangely did God take by surprise these hidden virtues of His poor servants, and crown them before all the world; for while they never thought of their family name as worth preserving, they still live by it on the pages of history! Many an ambitious parent, who has withheld a child from God that he might bear up his name, has seen, during his life, the last of his race die before his eyes.

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The little Francis was reared in the holy sentiments of his father and mother, and solitude and prayer were his delight. Instead of craving dainties, like the children we see, he took every possible opportunity to deny himself these indulgences, and was never so well pleased as when the food was plainer even than usual. At thirteen years of age his father placed him with the Franciscan Friars at St. Mark's, where he learned to read, and laid the foundation of that severely holy life which he ever afterwards led.

You can imagine how lonely the poor little cottage of James Martotille and his wife seemed to them, after their amiable child had left it—left it, not to return after a few months or even years at school, but, as they knew, for their lifetime. There were many dreary days and long evenings to look forward to, which hitherto had been cheered by their beloved boy, but neither of them would hold back from God what they had promised to Him; and besides, they knew their son would be happy in his vocation, and they also knew, that if he persevered, he would obtain many spiritual comforts and blessings for them which he could not while living with them in the world. There was but one indulgence of their fondness for this dear child, which they allowed to themselves, and this one was still a matter of devotion. I have told you that the parents of little Francis believed that St. Francis of Assisi had obtained this child for them from the hand of God, and before he had left them altogether, before they had given up their natural claim upon him, they wished to visit the

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spots made sacred by the seraphic piety of their dear patron, and to thank him for his kindness to them. They took with them the young boy, Francis, and thus the three made together the pilgrimage to Assisi, and to the humble church, called by the Benedictine Monks of Subiaco, to whom it once belonged, Portiuncula, and dedicated to the holy angels, in which St. Francis received so many graces, which was, on that account so dear to him, and which has been, ever since his death, a place of special devotion. When this act of thanksgiving had been performed, Francis, with the full consent of his parents, retired to a lonely place about half a mile from his native town; but finding, even there, too many things to distract him at his prayers, he made for himself a small cave on the sea shore, where, at the age of fifteen, he lived the peaceful, and sublime life of a hermit. He had no other bed than the rock itself, no other food than the herbs and berries which grew in a wood near by. Before he was twenty years old, two other persons joined him, desiring to lead the same life of prayer. The neighbors built three cells for them, and a little chapel in which they sung the praises of God, and where a priest from a neighboring parish sometimes said mass for them.

This was in 1436. Seventeen years after, the number of his disciples had become so large that the archbishop of Cosenza allowed them to build a large church, and monastery, on the same spot. So great was the love and veneration felt for these good monks,

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that the whole country joined to help them, and even noblemen claimed the honor of carrying burdens for the workmen.

While this building was going on, our saint performed several miracles, as appeared when the process for canonization, as it is called, compelled persons to speak, under oath, of the wonders they had seen. This process of canonization, dear children, is one which I wish you to understand very clearly. You must, first, remember that the Church does not *make* saints, any more than she makes dogmas or doctrines of belief. When a person dies who is esteemed very holy, so holy that every one speaks of his or her wonderful virtue, and piety, and also of his or her extraordinary gifts, either of miracles or of supernatural practices of devotion, the Church, although she may not appear to notice these expressions of admiration, takes very careful notice of them; and, when she finds that they really are extraordinary, she appoints some wise and prudent priests to collect the facts in this person's life, and these facts are given under oath, that is, in the most solemn manner, and in such a way as to prevent any mistakes. Besides those who are so ready to tell all the wonders done by this good man or woman, there are persons who are very ready to tell all the bad, or imperfect things, which this good person has ever done. The one appointed to hear, and to report, all these bad, or imperfect, acts of this good person's life, is called the *Devil's Advocate*, because Satan is always ready to tell our shortcomings and

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imperfections to our Divine Judge. Satan praises us to our faces, but he says very hard things of us to God; and while he is always excusing us to ourselves, he is our unpitying accuser at the bar of judgment. You see by this how the Church sifts the actions of her saints, as men sift wheat, when they wish to know if it is good wheat. After all these testimonies of living eye witnesses have been taken, as carefully as in a court of justice, the Church lays them quite one side, and waits until this generation, of perhaps partial friends or personal enemies, have all died; then she takes up the life of this good person again, looks at it carefully; and if she decides that this life is above the ordinary, and even the extraordinary, goodness of the faithful, she very cautiously calls this person Blessed, or, as she expresses it, she *beatifies* him. It is not until several generations after this, that she declares him to be a saint, and solemnly puts his name on the list or *canon* of the Church, from which time he is called a *canonized* saint.

An honest-minded man, who had been taught in his youth to look upon all the wonderful acts of the saints as imaginations of pious friends, was one day repeating some extraordinary piece of news; and a Catholic friend said to him, "Do you really believe that to be true?" "How can I doubt it," said the first, "when it has been told by such clear-headed witnesses, who could have no motive to deceive or exaggerate." "You then consider that testimony sufficient, however wonderful the fact may be?" "Certainly," said the

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honest-minded man. "And yet," said his friend, "you will not believe one of the miracles of the saints, although the wisest, and most honest, men of their generation were eye-witnesses to their miracles." After a good deal of talking the honest man owned, that he should allow to be good testimony what the Church rejects, when she is sifting the life of a saint; and should, also, call that a miracle, which the Church has, often and often, proved to be a delusion or a fancy. You see by this, my dear children, that the Church does not make saints, but only tells us when a good person is found to be so good, so extraordinarily and supernaturally good, as to be worthy to be placed on the list of those who are known to be saints, whose Office is read by every priest on their festival, on which day, also, they are honored in the Holy Sacrifice of the mass.

It was while the life of St. Francis was under this microscope of the Church, that the miracles which he performed during the building of his church and monastery, were made known.

When the buildings were completed, St. Francis set about regulating everything within and without; and, above all, labored to give to his monks such a rule as would enable them to attain to a very high degree of Christian perfection. *Charity* was the watchword of his order; and humility was so necessary to its life, in the eyes of St. Francis, that he begged the Pope to give them the name of Minims, to signify that they were the least in the house of God.

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From this time we hear of many wonders performed by our saint; but, as we find with all the saints, the greatest of the wonders which he performed was the practice, the daily, hourly practice and habit, of a supernatural, miraculous humility, charity and self-denial. When I say a supernatural, miraculous humility, charity and self-denial, I do not mean one that is against, or contrary, to the nature of man; but one which is above the power of any of us to practice by our own strength, or, which is simply above nature. The supernatural and miraculous, then, is not against our human nature, but above it; and there are certain very perfect dispositions which we cannot have, unless God gives us something which is above, and beyond, our natural strength. Both Adam and Eve were created with supernatural graces. When they lost their innocence, they lost these supernatural graces, and all their children and descendants, even down to ourselves, are born, not like Adam and Eve in a state of supernatural grace, but as Adam and Eve were after their fall; or, in a state of nature. The saints, by the use of those supernatural graces stored with the Church, and given to us in the sacraments, climbed above the state of nature into the supernatural state, in which miracles are as easy to them as the common actions of life are to us; and their supernatural humility, charity and self-denial, show how high they climbed on the way to perfection. Remember, always, this noble and blessed difference between nature and grace; and ask of God to give you, not the power to work miracles,

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but the grace of a supernatural charity, humility and self-denial, and your life will then be one perpetual miracle.

We are told that Ferdinand, king of Naples, was provoked with Francis for some very plain, but very necessary, advice given to him by St. Francis; and, pretending that the saint had built monasteries without his permission, ordered him to be seized, and brought to Naples as a prisoner. But when the officer who was sent to arrest him came into the presence of this meek servant of God, he was so moved by the readiness of the saint in preparing to go with him to Naples, that he was filled with awe, went back to the king without Francis, and persuaded him not to injure this good man.

Besides healing the sick, and even bringing the departed soul back to the body, by the power of his prayers, St. Francis was allowed to see into the future, and tell what would happen to his country and to his sovereigns; and almost numberless facts of this sort are told about him.

When we say that St. Francis cured the sick, that he made the lame to walk, or that he called the soul back to the body by his touch or by his ardent way of imploring God to do so, for His own greater glory, we mean something very different from the wonders and juggleries and mesmerisms performed, even at the present day, and in our own neighborhoods, for people who call themselves very wise. The children of the Catholic Church have only to study their cate-

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chism, to know the sin of consulting such persons, either for the curing of their sicknesses, or to know what is to happen to them in the future. Let them leave false prophets to those, who, denying the miracles of God's saints, and even of Jesus Christ Himself, are ready to believe every juggler's trick, and to throw aside their crutches at the word of a blasphemer.

In 1469, the Pope, Paul II., sent one of his chamberlains to learn if Francis was indeed the saint which so many called him. When the chamberlain arrived at Paula, Francis, as usual, was among the masons, at work on his church; but seeing two strangers coming towards him, he left his work and met them, bowing very low to them. The chamberlain had disguised himself, so as not to appear like a person of rank, nor even to be known as a priest; and when Francis met him with such humble courtesy he was equally humble, and attempted to kiss the hand of Francis, brown and hard with toil. But Francis would not allow this, and, falling on his knees, said he was himself bound to kiss the hands which God had consecrated during the thirty years he had said mass. The chamberlain was greatly surprised to hear a perfect stranger thus tell the number of years he had been a priest; but he said nothing, wishing to talk with Francis in his convent, aside from his companions. The chamberlain was a very eloquent man, and he tried to convince Francis, by a long discourse, that his rule was too severe, and also of the dangers to which a person is exposed who pretends to miraculous gifts, or who lives in any way differently

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from other good Christians; and urged him to leave all his extraordinary self-denials. Francis heard him patiently, and answered him with great humility; but, finding that the mind of his visitor was not changed, he took from the fire some burning coals, and holding them for a long time in his hand, said, "All creatures obey those who serve God with a perfect heart." These golden words were repeated by Pope Leo X. in the bill of his canonization. The chamberlain returned to the archbishop of Cosenza, and to the Holy Father at Rome, and told them that the sanctity of Francis was greater than his fame in the world.

The generous offering of an only child, and son, to God, seems to have been followed by a reward, even in this life, to the humble parents of our saint; for we afterwards hear of his sister, and of the miraculous consolation given to her by her brother. A youth, the nephew of the saint, having died, his mother, the saint's own sister, came to him for comfort, and filled his room with sounds of lamentation. After the mass had been said for the repose of this youth's soul, St. Francis ordered the body to be carried from the church to his cell, where he ceased not to pray, until, to the astonishment of the mother, St. Francis presented her son to her alive, and in perfect health.

But the miracle, which, among all the miracles of St. Francis, dwells deepest in my memory, and rouses my most lively gratitude, is one not impossible to many a hidden saint of God in our own day, in our

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own society, and in the very state, or town, or village in which we live.

Louis XI, king of France, a prince as tyrannical, as jealous of his own authority, and as impatient of everything that crossed his wishes, as any who ever wore a crown, after a fit of apoplexy fell into a slow decline. In his sickness he desired nothing so much as health, and dreaded nothing so much as death. He gave his physician ten thousand crowns every month, so long as he should preserve his life; and, under the feeling that this fellow-mortal could shorten or prolong his existence, he was not only obedient to every command that he gave him, but stood in the greatest awe of him; while towards every one else he was so perverse, so fretful, and even cruel, that his noblest subjects dreaded to go near him, and nothing could tempt them to ask of this powerful king the smallest favor. The wise Thomas à Kempis, in his Imitation of Christ, tells us that "Few are improved by sickness;" and so true was this of the poor, sick, unhappy king, Louis XI, that he shut himself up in one of his strongest castles, Plessis-les-Tours, near the city of Tours, not like a hermit who flies to some lonely wild where he finds but one comfort, the comfort of serving God and conversing with Him, but like some great polar bear, who sits in his den to growl at every one who comes near him, unless at his own command and to amuse him. Here, in order to divert his mind, he had jesters, dancers, all sorts of entertainments; but his peevishness and melancholy were all the same. At the very

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time, too, that he was thus trying to satisfy his restless wishes by what, any Christian knows, can never satisfy, never truly console, he was greedy for prayers, and ordered processions and pilgrimages for his health, and even against the north-wind, which he found increased his pains, and called for holy relics to be brought to his room. It may seem very strange to you, dear children, that a man, like Louis, could be so profane, and, at the same time, have so much faith in holy things; could act as if this world were all he needed for his happiness one moment, and the next moment show a superstitious faith, instead of the sound and reasonable faith of a good Christian, in the supernatural means which God has allowed us to use in our extreme need. But sin makes men very inconsistent, and above all men the instructed Catholic, who knows what sin is, and yet commits it with his eyes wide open.

While Louis was thus showing to the world the foolishness of a sinful Christian, and while his sickness continued to increase, in spite of physicians and pious prayers, he remembered having heard, in his days of dissipation and prosperity, of the holy hermit of Calabria, who had done so many wonders in behalf of the suffering; and he sent immediately one of his embassadors to beg this humble man, Francis de Paula, to come to his castle, and cure him of his malady; making the greatest promises to serve both him and his Order. We can all understand how a saint, like Francis, would not be moved by any promises to him-

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self; but we might think when a great king offered to befriend his young Order, to give it lands and houses, and to make it an honorable Order, that even Francis would think this a providence and not to be slighted. But the saints esteem as very little, what the world will go upon its hands and knees, and lick the dust, to make its own. St. Francis knew that it was not the man who could make the most money for his Order who would be its greatest benefactor; but the one who should bring into that Order, most of the spirit of God. St. Francis of Assisi would not allow his religious to put up grand buildings, nor increase, in any way, the riches and possessions of his Order; and St. Francis of Paula knew that the money of an impenitent king, like Louis XI, would not do his Order of Minims any good. He therefore declined this great honor of curing the king by a miracle; which Louis no sooner found out, than he entreated Ferdinand, the king of Naples, to send his humble subject, Francis, to him. But Francis told king Ferdinand that he could not tempt God, nor would he travel a thousand miles to work a miracle which was asked from low and selfish motives.

The king, being thus denied, desired, more than ever, what had been refused to him, and begged the Pope, Sixtus IV., to use his power in his behalf. Sixtus, no doubt, saw in this anxiety of the king to secure the saint, some sign of grace, for he commanded Francis to go to the French king by two formal writings. St. Francis immediately obeyed, by setting out for France.

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He passed through Naples, where Ferdinand honored him with marks of the greatest respect. He also took Rome in his way, and the Pope and cardinals lavished upon him tokens of favor and regard. He set sail from Ostia, and landed in France, healing many persons sick of the plague along the road. The king, overwhelmed with joy, and believing that his own relief from ills and pains was near at hand, gave a purse of two thousand crowns to the one who brought the first news of the saint's arrival in his dominions, and sent his eldest son, the Dauphin, to meet the saint at Amboise and bring him to his palace. On the 24th of April, 1482, St. Francis arrived at Plessis. The king, with all his court, went out to meet him, and falling on his knees implored him to obtain of God a prolongation of his life. St. Francis told him, no wise man ought to desire this; adding, that the lives of kings had their appointed time to end like the lives of their meanest subjects, that the will of God was not to be changed, and that there remained for his majesty only to make an act of resignation to the Divine will, and to prepare himself for a happy death.

The king, who had no doubt expected quite a different answer, was not angry with him, as he would have been with any one else, but ordered that he should be led to a room in the palace near the chapel, and that an interpreter should be sent to him; for our saint, with all his heavenly wisdom, could not speak French. St. Francis, thus lodged near the king, had many opportunities to speak to Louis, both alone, and before

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his courtiers, all of whom were persuaded that Francis spoke from the inspiration of God. The physician who had been so long deferred to by the king, and who had told him that he should, some day, be sent away like all the others who had served this cruel tyrant, but that the king would not live eight days after he had left him, was furious against St. Francis, and did all he could to destroy his influence with Louis; but the unhappy king was faithful to his saintly friend, and corresponded to the grace which he had obtained of having this holy man by his side. And, for this fidelity, he received his reward; not, indeed, the recovery of his health, nor the prolongation of his miserable life, but the grace of a perfect change of heart, and desire, and purpose. When he found his end approaching he no longer repined, but sending for his saintly friend received all the sacraments, commended his three children to his care, and expired peacefully, in the arms of St. Francis, on the 30th of August, 1483.

St. Francis, who had performed countless miracles for the relief of the poor and the humble, refused to work the one desired by a powerful monarch, not out of a lack of respect for a ruler, but because he knew the miracle would only confirm Louis in his wickedness; and, also, because he wished to obtain a far better answer to his prayers than a long life in this world; which was, a happy death for this monarch, who had merited a very unhappy one.

We can also learn, my dear children, how much

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God esteems sincere faith, even when other virtues are lacking; for He allows it very often to go in advance, and to procure other graces, which, at length, make a soul acceptable to Him. It seems that the faith of Louis, imperfect as it was, had something in it pleasing to God, for He permitted it to obtain the best and highest answer; whereas, many persons who practice the natural virtues of kindness, justice and temperance, yet scoff at the objects of supernatural faith, fail of those graces which God bestows at the prayer of faith, however imperfect. He who asks, "nothing doubting," is sure of some answer, perhaps better than the one he craves.

We are told that the Dauphin, when he became king Charles VIII, honored St. Francis even more than his father had done, considering him his wisest counsellor, and visiting him every day as long as he stayed at Plessis. St. Francis stood as god-father for his eldest son, to whom his name was given; and the young king built a beautiful convent for our saint in the park of Plessis, in a place called Montils, and another at Amboise, on the very spot where he met St. Francis when he was Dauphin; and in 1495, when he made a triumphal entrance into Rome, and was saluted by Pope Alexander VI. as emperor of Constantinople, he built in Rome, on Mount Pincio, a stately monastery for the Order of Minims, under the name of the Blessed Trinity, to which none but Frenchmen can be admitted as monks. During the reign of this same king, St. Francis founded the convent of Nigeon, near

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Paris; and at this time two doctors, who had opposed the Order of Minims before the bishop of Paris, were so moved by the sight of the saint at Plessis, that they entered the Order in 1506. King Charles died in 1498, and Louis XII, succeeded him. At first he allowed the saint to return to Italy, but he soon showed so much anxiety for his return that St. Francis came back to Plessis, which God had blessed by his presence.

Again at Plessis, he was the centre of piety, until, warned by his great age to prepare for death, he lived in his cell, for three months, the hermit life which he had loved as a boy on the sea-shore of Calabria, denying himself to every one, that nothing might divert his thoughts from God and eternity. He fell sick of a fever on Palm Sunday, 1506. On Holy Thursday he called all his monks into the sacristy, exhorted them to love God, each other, and all mankind, and to observe their rule punctually. This great saint, who had performed so many miracles, then made his confession and received Holy Communion barefoot, with a cord about his neck, as is the custom of his Order. He died on the 2d of April, 1508, being ninety-one years old. The mother of Francis I, prepared his winding sheet with her own hands, and he was canonized by Leo X. in 1519. His body remained uncorrupted in the church of Plessis-les-Tours until 1562, when the Huguenots broke open the shrine and found it whole and perfect, fifty-five years after his death. They then dragged it about the streets, and burned it in a fire made with the wood of a large crucifix, which

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they had hewed to pieces. Some of his bones were recovered, and are kept in several monasteries of his Order, at Plessis, Nigeon, Paris, Aix, Naples, Paula, and Madrid.

The best pictures of St. Francis de Paula, are by the great Spanish artist, Murillo. He is represented as a very old man, with a long white beard. He wears a dark brown tunic and the cord of St. Francis of Assisi. His habit differs from others in the short scapular, or piece hanging over the shoulders, reaching a little below the girdle, and rounded at the ends; at the back of this scapular is sewed a hood that is drawn over the head. In pictures of St. Francis the word "Charity," is generally found in the glory above, or carried on a scroll by an angel.

A picture painted by Lavinia Fontana, who was one of the best portrait painters of her time, represents the Duchess d'Angouleme, the same one who prepared his winding-sheet, kneeling, with four maids of honor, at the feet of St. Francis, and presenting to him her infant child, his god-son, afterwards king Francis I.

Plessis-les-Tours still cherishes the memory of Francis de Paula; and a descendant of the noble house of Plessis, told me, only a few days ago, of the picture which represents the Daulphin Charles meeting the saint. Through the holy prayers of St. Francis, Plessis has become a shrine, instead of the hated retreat of a sick tyrant; and the representatives of the house of Plessis carry with them, as their choicest claim upon

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the love of Christians, the holy memory of the son of the humble peasant, James Martotille, of Calabria.

Pray for *us*, O holy St. Francis, that our death may be, like thine, the gate to a blissful eternity with God, and His angels and saints; since that life is indeed lost, worse than useless, which does not close with a good death! To the soul at peace with God, the thought of death brings no melancholy, but rather a peaceful looking forward to a perfect joy, unmixed with evil. "How sweet," exclaimed a saint, "to close one's eyes on this sorrowful, uncertain, unsatisfactory life, and open them in an instant on God, and the assurance of eternal bliss!" Again, then, let us say, "Holy St. Francis pray for us!" and repeat our Hail Mary, closing ever with that powerful request, "Pray for us now, and at the hour of our death!"

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SAINT BEDE.

DO you ever, my dear children, when admiring a noble landscape, stop to think how much the beauty of one part of this landscape depends upon the beauty of some other part of it; how the loveliness of the meadow is made all the lovelier by its winding brooks, its swiftly-flowing river, or, by a single majestic elm, standing, as I remember to have seen one in my native valley, amid the verdure and the sunshine, its graceful branches lifted and swayed by the lightest breeze of summer, and holding the eye, at every turn, by its beauty and grandeur—how the sublimity of mountain-ranges takes a new glory from the atmosphere of some placid lake, as the Adirondacks are seen across Lake Champlain from Burlington, steeped from base to summit in violet-tinted mists, with all the kindling splendors of a summer sunset, burning, shifting, and then fading away, above them—do you ever, I repeat, stop to think how much the meadow and the river and the elm,

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how much the mountains, the lake and the sunset, owe to each other? You could not paint one without painting the other; you never remember one without remembering the other; and, through all the changing years of your life, the meadow and the mountains will live in your memory, glorified by the graceful majesty of the elm, by the purple mists of distance, and the shifting and flushing hues of sunrise and sunset.

History and the lives of great men illustrate, and are illustrated by, each other. To know the saint, to have a clear picture of him before your mind's eye, you must know something of the country and the generation in which he lived; and although the people of these days may pretend to despise, or, may honestly despise, through ignorance or inherited prejudice, the saints of God, yet these saints belonged to the times in which they lived in such a manner, that no true history of those times can be written without noticing them; and sometimes a saint stands out, among the men and the events of his day, as the elm stands out on the "north meadow" of old Deerfield, giving, by its singleness and its perfection, a majesty to the landscape altogether its own. Of no saint can this be said with more justice than of St. Bede, or, Venerable Bede, as he is generally called. An "Anglo-Saxon, born at one extreme limit of the Christian world, and of a race only half a century before plunged in the darkness of idolatry," he stands before us now, after so many centuries, as the most learned man of his

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time, as the father of English history and the actual founder of history in the middle ages; for, by the precision of his language and by the accuracy of his narrative, he laid a foundation upon which later writers could build the edifice of a true and noble history of succeeding generations. No one, therefore, can separate the life of St. Bede from the annals of England, and no one can banish him from his true place among the choicest scholars of that, or of any other, time.

It was in 673, while St. Benedict Biscop was bishop of Northumbria, one of the four ancient kingdoms of England, that on one of the estates belonging to the monastery of St. Peter, founded by St. Benedict Biscop at the mouth of the river Wear, a boy was born named Beda (which in Saxon means *prayer*,) or as we call it Bede. We know nothing of his family, excepting that he was given by his relatives, at the age of seven years into the care of St. Benedict, (or Bennet, as he is sometimes called,) and that St. Bennet confided him to his friend, Ceolfrid, who took him in 680 as one of of his colony of twenty monks, "tonsured and untonsured," who went with him to lay the foundations of another monastery about five miles from that of St. Peter's and called, very properly, St. Paul. There, at St. Paul's, was our little friend, Beda, in the year 686, when a terrible pestilence swept off all the monks of St. Paul's but the good "Abbot Ceolfrid, and," as the annals read even to this day, "one little boy." Beda must have been one of the brave little boys, for we

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read that the abbot contrived, with his help, to chant the canonical hours, which they did in the midst of their sighs, and tears, and heart-rending sorrows, until other monks joined them in their desolated retreat.

It is plain that Ceolfrid had no notion of leaving his monastery, of St. Paul's at Jarrow, on account of this misfortune; and it is also plain that the boy, Beda, had no notion of leaving the good abbot. This was his home; and of all the pictures which the writing of these pleasant lives of the saints has brought before me, few have had so tender a charm as that of the abbot and his little novice, singing, amid the desolation at Jarrow, the praises of God at the canonical hours —matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline—the very same as when the stalls, (or seats of the monks in the convent chapel,) were filled by their good brothers in the pleasant days gone by, instead of being empty; the very sight of these empty seats making the chapel lonelier to the only two living, out of the twenty who had left Wearmouth, for Jarrow-on-the-Tyne, with so light a step six years before.

Before we go any further I must be sure that my very youngest reader, or listener, understands about the "tonsure" of our friends, the monks of Jarrow. If you look at the picture of St. Laurence, in this book, you will see a perfect Roman tonsure, such as was worn by the monks of that day. In the picture of St. Benedict, too, you will see a young monk with a perfect tonsure, *i. e.*, the hair is shaved on the top of the head so as to leave a wreath, or circlet, of hair only.

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St. Benedict has lost some of his tonsure by reason of age, so that the circle is not perfect; but this, you must remember is a *Roman* tonsure, and was the sign of a professed monk, or one who had made his full vows. Little Beda could not have boasted of a tonsure when he sung the Hours, alone, with the abbot; but we hear that six years after, when he was only nineteen years old, he was made a deacon, like St. Laurence, and then, we may presume, he was a tonsured monk.

You will be surprised to hear that, although St. Bede was so learned as to be called the first scholar of his age in the whole world, he never traveled out of his own country, not even to Rome, the desire of all Christian pilgrims. He lived always at Jarrow, and in one of his books, "The Records of the Fathers of Wearmouth and Jarrow," he dwells, with delight, on the memory of the many happy years he himself passed within its walls, and on the thought that none of them had been spent in idleness. "All my life," he says, "I have spent in this monastery, giving my whole attention to the study of the Holy Scriptures; and in the intervals between the hours of regular discipline, and the duties of church psalmody, I ever took delight in either learning, or teaching, or writing." He was exact to the minute in the observance of his rule, and although its duties often interrupted his favorite studies, he never sought to be excused from any of them; and never, especially, from attendance in choir. "If the angels did not find me there among my brethren," he would say, "would they not ask, "Where is Bede?

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why comes he not to worship at the appointed hour with the others?" His disciple, Cuthbert, says of him, "I can declare with truth, that never saw I with my eyes, or heard I with my ears, of any man so unwearied in giving thanks to God." Pious writers tell us, that, as of the ten lepers spoken of in the Gospel who were healed of their leprosy by the power of Jesus Christ, "only one returned to give thanks," so it is with Christians who pray with great zeal that they may obtain blessings, but seldom remember to thank God for His favors when received. St. Bede, it seems, was very careful to make thanksgivings, and loved the praises of God, which "were ever in his mouth."

But you will ask, perhaps, how St. Bede, if he never traveled, became so learned? To answer this very sensible question, we must go back, not only to St. Bennet, but to the great Pope, St. Gregory, under whose inspiration the new era of Christian letters began, even in Italy. From the new foundations of learning and piety laid by him, he sent the Apostle of England, St. Augustine, to convert that nation fully to Christianity. A monastery, dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, was founded at Canterbury by St. Augustine, and this monastery was under the care of St. Gregory himself. A catalogue of the library that St. Augustine and his companions brought with them to England, is preserved at Trinity College, Cambridge. It consisted of "A Bible in two volumes, a Psalter and a book of the Gospels, a Martyrology, the Apocryphal Lives of the Apostles, and the Exposition of certain

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Epistles and Gospels." The short catalogue closes with these few words: "These are the foundation, or beginning, of the library of the whole English Church, A. D. 601." The writer from whom I have taken these facts, adds, "We may well linger with delight over this short list, that displays to us as the foundation stone of all our knowledge, the Sacred Scriptures; these were the books sent by a Pope to be the beginning of a national library, and from them St. Augustine began to teach the English." It was St. Gregory who watched carefully over all the necessities of the young Church, and sent to it, not only sacred vessels, vestments, church ornaments and holy relics, but "many books." From the schools starting up under such powerful encouragement came the scholar, St. Bennet Biscop, whose journey to Rome, in company with St. Wilfrid, fixed one purpose deep in his heart; to devote his life and his great energies to the founding of a noble seat of learning in his native land, and to fit himself to do his work well before beginning it.

In order to do this, he gave up the governing of his monastery to a still greater scholar, named Adrian, and spent two years in studying under him as under a master. It was when such pupils as Bennet were ready to study under such teachers as Adrian, that the love of art, and of science, and, above all, of sacred letters, inflamed the minds and hearts of the noblest men of that age. After studying at Canterbury under Adrian, and that learned Greek, Archbishop Theodore, Bennet planned a fourth visit to Rome, purchasing,

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and begging, books all the way, and returned to England loaded with treasures, that were afterwards stored in the two monasteries of SS. Peter and Paul, where our Bede was placed, like a bee among the blooming clover-fields. There was no need that he should travel, for the riches of the world's best minds had been placed by Bennet in the libraries he had founded with such a holy enthusiasm. And not only books, but fine arts, unknown to his countrymen, were brought by this ardent scholar and saint, Bennet Biscop, to the rough Britons. The French artisans were called over to England to give beauty and strength to his stone edifice, and glass-makers, the first ever seen in England, were invited to put in the windows. On his fifth visit to Rome, in company with the abbot, Ceolfrid, he brought back, not only books and relics, but pictures. At the end of the Church of St. Peter he placed pictures of our Lady and the twelve Apostles; on the south wall were scenes from the Gospels; and on the north the visions of the Apocalypse. The pictures placed in St. Paul's were so arranged as to show the connection between the Old and New Testament; a picture of Isaac, bearing on his shoulders the wood of the sacrifice, standing beside one of our Lord bending under the wood of His cross; a picture of the brazen serpent which God commanded Moses to raise in the sight of the plague-stricken Israelites, that all who looked upon it might live, beside a picture of the Crucifixion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "Those, therefore," says St. Bede, "who knew not

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how to read, entering these churches, found objects representing Jesus Christ and His saints, and recalling to their memory the grace of His Incarnation, and the terrors of the last judgment." St. Bennet also brought back with him, John the Venerable, abbot of St. Martin's, and arch-chanter of St. Peter's, that he might teach in the English churches the method of singing, throughout the year, as it was practiced in St. Peter's at Rome, and "this he did for Wearmouth and for all the monasteries of that province, and many invited him to teach in other places."

Nothing could give us a more correct notion of the value which the Church places upon decorum and beauty in the ordering of her sacred ceremonies, than the zeal of St. Bennet in bringing from Rome, to his monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow, this venerable teacher of the chant approved by the Church. We can believe that there were very few quavers and semi-quavers in the music taught by this holy ecclesiastic; but lest you should imagine this simplicity to be a sign of rudeness and ignorance, I will remind you that the Gregorian Chant which you hear every Sunday when the priest sings the first clause of the *Credo*, the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, the *Preface* and the *Pater noster*, is the chant which the great St. Gregory, the special friend and protector of the Church in England, had himself arranged for the sacred Offices. The music sung by the priest at the altar is the same in all countries; and the Church watches very strictly over this part of the Divine worship, in order that no light or

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worldly music may be sung in her sanctuary, and, also, that the voice of her priest may have that solemnity, that sweetness, and that holy accuracy, which alone is worthy of his sacred place at the altar of God. But if the Church shows such care for the music within the sanctuary, can we suppose her indifferent to the music sung by the choir? So far from being indifferent, she has claimed the noblest music, ever composed by man, for her choirs; and when the leaders of choirs, or the choirs themselves, turn from these treasures of sacred song to the music of the most perfect operas, presuming to sing in the Divine honor what has been composed to express human affection, they not only profane the worship of the Church, but show a depraved taste, and a mind and heart incapable of enjoying the celestial harmonies to which the Church has given a voice. The highest praise that can be given to any choir is, that it sings religious music in a religious spirit.

When we read the descriptions, given us by St. Bede, of the swiftness with which this love of learning, like fire on our western prairies, spread over a whole nation, we sigh over the lukewarm indolence of our own generation, when "good society" seems to be cloyed with its shallow learning, and careless of the honors which true scholarship should win in every civilized community. Yet the hunger and thirst for knowledge which then distinguished the Christians of Britain, was accompanied by a simplicity of manners, to be seen no where in its most charming perfection, as

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it is when united with profound learning, excepting in monasteries. These men, who were devoting their lives to establishing seminaries of learning on the wild shores of England, might, every day, be seen in the kitchen and farm-yard. Abbot Easterwine, once a courtier of king Egfrid's, who filled the place of abbot during the absence of St. Bennet, delighted in winnowing the corn, giving milk to the young calves, working at the mill or forge, and helping in the bake-house. It is thus that he is described by St. Bede, who also tells us of the "spiritual beauty of the abbot's transparent countenance, his musical voice, and gentle temper, and how, being seized with his last illness, he came out into the open air, and sitting down, called for his weeping brethren, and then, after the manner of his tender nature, gave them all the kiss of peace and died at night as they were singing lauds."

It was in such an atmosphere of zeal for God and for all that could beautify the service of man towards his Creator, that St. Bede was nurtured; and the sanctified juices thus sent, like the sweet vernal sap, through his whole being, he returned to the world, and perpetuated in it, by his works.

We have said that St. Bede was most exact in fulfilling all the duties commanded by his rule of life as a monk. Besides these duties he was both mass-priest and professor in the schools. By the rule of the first, he was obliged to administer the sacraments, visit the sick, and preach on Sundays and festivals; by the second, to teach to others the learning he had himself

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acquired. Even before his ordination, the monastic school was placed under his direction, and he gave instruction to 600 monks of Jarrow, as well as to pupils flocking from all parts of England.

You could hardly recognize in this picture of St. Bede, or, Venerable Bede, any likeness to the "lazy monks," so often quoted for the benefit of boys and girls, who do not know how many of the most common blessings of civilization we owe to the laborious monks.

It was in the midst of such various labors that his numerous works were composed, written and copied by himself alone, as he tells us; and in the list that he made of them before his death he names forty-five, of which he was the author. Among these books are discourses and commentaries on Holy Scripture, treatises on grammar, astronomy, the logic of Aristotle, music, geography, arithmetic, orthography, versification, the computum, (or the table of time for movable feasts), and natural philosophy. His Ecclesiastical History and Lives of the Fathers are like deep wells, not to be drawn dry of their carefully filtered facts, and are, and always must be, delightful in their unaffected way of telling their story of men and their times. St. Bede was also skilled in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew tongues.

The one special debt of gratitude, however, that we, English speaking people, owe to St. Bede, was earned by his labors to perfect the English language, by establishing grammatical rules. My young read-

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ers, perhaps, find their English grammar a very dull study, they may grow weary over its adverbs and adjectives, its singular and plural, and, above all, its verbs, and the agreement between them and the nouns and pronouns. They may never have thought much about the way in which this grammar has been classified and simplified until almost any child, after it has learned to read, can study a grammar, the rules of which may be taught us as soon as we talk at all. Still less have they thought how many great scholars have used their choicest learning to assist us in doing what seems, no doubt, to my young readers, the most natural thing in the world for any body to do—speak good English. These scholars were, almost without exception, monks, and, barbarous as any language might be, it could not resist the persevering efforts of our friends, the monks, to bring it into order and shapes of beauty. St. Bede is known to have preached to the people in English, and he translated, for the instruction of his flock, both the Psalter and the Four Gospels. To understand the labor necessary to accomplish all this, you must remember, that before their conversion to Christianity, the Anglo-Saxons—who are now so proud of their learning, and boast of it as if it had come to their race by natural inheritance—had no *written* compositions of any sort; their poetry, even, consisted of songs, and narratives, that were preserved solely in the memory of their bards, who made additions as their genius prompted them. This poetry was not written down until the time of King

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Alfred in the ninth century, and then only very imperfectly. It was to bring this rude, but rich, language into a form capable of expressing every sentiment of the heart and soul of man, as we see it afterwards used by Shakespeare in his immortal plays and tragedies, that St. Bede used his knowledge of those already perfected languages, the Latin, and, especially the Greek, that most perfect of all the languages ever spoken or written by man. To St. Bede belongs the glory of having, first, applied himself to this noble task, and we find that his reason for so doing was worthy of a Christian scholar; for, writing, in 735, a long letter to his dearest friend, Egbert, archbishop of York, he urges him to appoint priests to the rural districts who would be earnest in teaching to the peasantry the doctrines and the practice of their religion, and, especially, to teach them to repeat the *Creed* and the *Our Father* in their native tongue, "which," he adds, "I have myself translated into English to assist those priests who are not familiar with the native tongue."

The respect felt by this great scholar for his native language even in its rude state, may be a lesson to many, even at this day, when we have such reason to love and honor it. Our love of country, and of our native tongue, is sometimes deeply hurt to see how eager people are to learn to speak many languages, while the charms of the rich and noble language they are allowed to claim as their own with all its treasures of history, the lives of its heroes, the ballads and

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romance of its youthful ages, the noble poetry of its later times, is quite overlooked. The greatest pains is taken to have mere children learn to speak French and German, while they are allowed to speak and write their own language very imperfectly; and are so ignorant of the principles on which it is founded as not to be able to distinguish between a glaring corruption of their mother tongue, or a base importation from another, and good English; and some are even so lost to self respect, as to prefer a very commonplace French phrase to a noble Anglo-Saxon one. It should be the pride of every child to speak, and write, his native tongue with absolute correctness, and, with as much elegance as circumstances will allow. Every child, therefore, born to speak the Anglo-Saxon, or English tongue, should feel a just pride and a lofty enthusiasm, measured only by his love of his country and of his race, in preserving all the richness, strength and harmony of his native language; and, to consider that the purity of that language is one of the tests of the civilization, and refinement, and also of the sterling excellence, of his nation. Whatever may be your reason for learning other languages well, remember there are ten-fold stronger and better reasons, for learning your own perfectly; and if you have never studied any language but your own, do not feel ashamed; only take the more pains to study that in such a manner as to honor it both by your spoken and your written word. A pure accent, perfectly grammatical expressions, and correct spelling, are accomplishments of

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which one has reason to be proud; while for the absence of these, no smattering of a dozen modern or ancient tongues can ever atone. Besides these very solid acquirements, all children, whether boys or girls, should, as they grow up, become acquainted with the works of the best authors in the English language. You should not be satisfied with reading every new novel, nor even with reading every new history, or poem, that is published, but you should go back to the old poets, to the old historians, who have been tried by generations and have been found very nearly perfect; and thus your taste and judgment will be formed upon the best models, and your ear so trained that it will be offended by any inaccuracy, or by any words that are against the spirit, and genius of our language. You will never, probably, speak French, German, Italian or Spanish, with the purity of a native of any one of those countries; but do not disgrace yourself by speaking English like a foreigner. A Parisian or a Florentine is proud of the purity of his accent. Emulate them, not by cultivating the Parisian or Florentine accent, but by the purity of your English accent and of your English diction. St. Bede would commend you, I am very certain, for such a patriotic and decorous emulation.

I have spoken of the list, written out by St. Bede himself, of his works. At the end of this list, is a prayer, which my young friends will read with tender interest, for it will give them a deep look into the sanctified heart and mind of St. Bede. "Oh, good

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Jesus, who hast deigned to refresh my soul with the sweet streams of knowledge, grant to me that I may one day mount to Thee, who art the source of all wisdom, and remain forever in Thy divine presence."

Such was the modesty of this great man, that we are told by one who does not speak without knowledge of the subject, that if St. Bede had been left to his own will, his name and his learning would have been lost to us. But in 703, having been made priest, both his bishop and his abbot commanded him to write for the welfare of his countrymen. He obeyed, and for thirty years his pen was never idle. The great plan of writing an Ecclesiastical History of the Anglo-Saxons, was spoken of to him by the abbot of St. Augustine's in Canterbury, himself a disciple of St. Theodore and Adrian. All the English prelates approved of the plan, and were not slow in communicating to St. Bede all the information within their reach; and Pope Gregory III. allowed the records of the Holy See to be examined to aid St. Bede in his work. When finished it was received with applause by the public; succeeding generations preserved it as a memorial of the virtues of their ancestors; and Alfred the Great translated it into the Anglo-Saxon tongue, for the benefit of those who could not read it in the original Latin.

We must now come, however unwillingly, with St. Bede to that narrow gate through which all must pass, sooner or later, the learned and the unlearned, the faithful and the careless, the pious and the lukewarm. To

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us it is sad, even in imagination, to stand by the death-bed of this lovely Christian scholar; but we must believe, that, to St. Bede, it was a thought full of joy to find himself coming, nearer and nearer every day, to this narrow gate of death. What terrors could death have for one whose baptismal innocence had never been sullied by rude contact with a wicked world, and who, in the holy peace of a cloister, had kept himself unspotted even from the ambition that is said to be "the last infirmity of noble minds!" His character is thus given in the breviary lesson for his feast: "He was easily kindled, and moved to compunction by study, and whether reading or teaching often wept abundantly. And after study he always applied himself to prayer, well knowing that the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures is to be gained rather by the grace of God than by our own efforts. He had many scholars, all of whom he inspired with extraordinary love of learning, and what is more, he infused into them the holy virtue of religion; he was most affable to the good, but terrible to the proud and negligent; sweet in countenance, with a musical voice, and an aspect at once cheerful and grave."

The translation of the Four Gospels was the work on which he was employed when the summons came for him to put aside all labors, however holy, and forever unite himself with God. We shall see how St. Bede spent the last days of his life, and this will help us to understand how sacred a thing learning is in the eyes of a saint.

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The particulars which I shall copy for you are quoted, by all who have written about St. Bede, from a letter written by his pupil, Cuthbert, to a schoolfellow, Cuthwin, and this letter shows how much more touching is a simple narrative of facts than any studied eulogy. Little did the young man, Cuthbert, think, that this letter, written with a swelling heart and tearful eyes for his fellow-student, who loved St. Bede as he did himself, would find its way to the children of the nineteenth century, living in a country undreamed of by the holy and learned monks of Jarrow-on-the-Tyne. I shall quote it entire, that my readers may have a specimen of a letter written, by one young monk to another, in the eighth century, more than one thousand years ago.

"To his most beloved in God, and fellow-reader Cuthwin, Cuthbert, his fellow-pupil, wisheth health in God forever.

"I received with pleasure the present that you sent me, and perused with satisfaction the letter of your devout reverence. For it informed me of that which I most earnestly hoped for—that masses and holy prayers are diligently performed in your monastery for Beda, the beloved of God, the father and master of us both. I feel then the greater pleasure, on account of my love for him, to describe briefly, and to the best of my ability, in what manner he departed this life; the more so, as this is what you particularly request.

"About a fortnight before the feast of Easter, (April 17), he was reduced to a state of great debility with

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difficulty of breathing, but without much pain; and in that condition he lasted till the day of the Lord's Ascension, the seventh before the calends of June, (May 26). This time he passed cheerfully and joyfully, giving thanks to Almighty God both by day and night, or rather at all hours of the day and night. He continued to deliver lessons to us daily, spending the rest of his time in psalmody, and the night also in joy and thanksgiving, unless he were interrupted by a short sleep; and yet, even then, the moment he awoke he began again, and never ceased with outstretched hands to return thanks to God. I can declare with truth, that I never saw with my eyes, nor heard with my ears, of any man who was so unwearied in giving thanks to the living God.

"O truly happy man! He chanted the passage from the blessed Apostle Paul—'It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' (Heb. x, 31), and several other passages from Holy Writ, warning us to throw off all torpor of soul in consideration of our last hour. And being conversant with Anglo-Saxon poetry, he repeated several passages, and composed the following lines in our tongue:

"'Before our forced departure no man is more wise than he needs to be; no man knows how much he ought to search, before leaving this world, what shall be the judgment of the soul for good or evil, after the day of death.'

"He also chanted the antiphons according to his and our custom. One of these is, 'O king of glory, Lord

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of hosts, who on this day didst ascend in triumph above all the heavens, leave us not orphans, but send upon us the spirit of truth, the promised of the Father. Alleluia.' When he came to the words, 'leave us not orphans,' he burst into tears and wept much; and after a while he resumed where he had broken off, and we, who heard him, wept with him. We wept and studied by turns; or rather wept all the time that we studied.

"Thus we passed in joy the fifty days till the festival of the Ascension, and he rejoiced greatly and gave thanks to God for the infirmities under which he suffered, often repeating 'God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,' (Heb. xii, 6), with other passages of Scripture, and the saying of St. Ambrose, 'I have not lived so as to be ashamed to live among you, nor do I fear to die, for we have a gracious God.'

"During these days besides the lessons which he gave us, and the chant of the psalms, he undertook the composition of two memorable works, that is he translated into our language the Gospel of St. John as far as 'But what are these among so many?' etc., (John vi, 9), and made a collection of extracts from the notes of Isidore, the bishop, saying, 'I will not suffer my pupils to read falsehoods, and to labor without profit in that book, after my death.' But on the Tuesday before the Ascension, his difficulty of breathing began to distress him exceedingly, and a slight swelling appeared in his feet. He spent the whole day, and dictated to us with cheerfulness, saying occasionally, 'Lose no time, I know not how long I may

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last. Perhaps in a very short time my Maker may take me.' In fact, it seemed to us that he knew the time of his death. He lay awake the whole night praising God; and at dawn, on the Wednesday morning, ordered us to write quickly, which we did, till the hour of terce, (nine o'clock). At that hour we walked in procession with the relics, as the rubric for the day prescribed; but one of us remained to wait on him, and said to him, 'Dearest master, there still remains one chapter unwritten. Will it fatigue you if I ask more questions?' 'No,' said Beda, 'take your pen, and mend it, and write quickly.' This he did.

"At none, (three in the afternoon), he said to me, 'I have some valuables in my little chest—pepper, handkerchiefs, and incense. Run quickly and bring the priests of the monastery to me, that I may make to them such presents as God hath given to me. The rich of this world give gold and silver, and other things of value; I will give to my brethren what God hath given to me, and will give it with love and pleasure.' I shuddered, but did as he had bidden. He spoke to each one in his turn, reminding and entreating them to celebrate masses, and to pray diligently for him, which all readily promised to do.

"When they heard him say that they should see him no more in this world, all burst into tears; but their tears were tempered with joy, when he said, 'It is time that I return to Him who made me out of nothing. I have lived long, and kindly hath my merciful Judge forecast the course of my life for me. The

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time of my dissolution is at hand. I wish to be released and to be with Christ.'

"In this way he continued to speak cheerfully till sunset, when the forementioned youth said, 'Beloved master, there is still one sentence unwritten.' 'Then write quickly,' said Beda. In a few minutes the youth said, 'It is finished.' 'Thou hast spoken truly,' replied Beda, 'take my head between thy hands, for it is my delight to sit opposite to that holy place in which I used to pray; let me sit and invoke my Father.' Sitting thus on the pavement of his cell, and repeating, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' as he finished the word 'Ghost,' he breathed his last, and took his departure for heaven. All who saw him die declare that they never beheld any man close his life in so devout and tranquil a frame of mind; for as long as the breath was in his body, he never ceased to repeat the *Gloria Patri*, with other religious expressions, nor to give praise with extended hands to the true and living God. Know, however, beloved brother, that I have much more to relate of him, but my want of skill in composition obliges me to be brief. I intend, however, at some future time to write more fully what I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears."

Thus died St. Bede, a little after sunset, May 26th, of the year 735, on the eve of the Feast of our Lord's Ascension, celebrating that joyful festival, we may believe, among the heavenly hosts, and those saints made perfect, who, like St. Bede, never tire of the

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Divine praises; their ever dilating knowledge of the perfections of the Deity exciting them, continually, to new songs of love and jubilation.

We hope many a Catholic schoolboy will take the holy Beda for his patron, invoking him when he feels his ardor for study, or his perseverance in the paths of learning, beginning to fail; and like St. Beda, inflaming anew the sacred fire by consecrating to God, and to His most sweet and gentle service, whatever of mind or heart has been bestowed upon him; not forgetting to say, Holy St. Bede pray for me, that like you I may live and die to the praise of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen!

St. Bede is spoken of in the Roman martyrology on the 26th of May. His Office, however, is celebrated in England on the 29th of October, on account of some translation of the relics, it may be. This last date makes him the patron of a dear boy who died, I believe, in a state of innocence that must have made him dear to the heart of St. Bede, and he certainly made St. Bede very dear to my own. I beg for this dear child, who was laid, long ago in his early grave, a "Rest in peace," from every one of my readers.

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SAINT DUNSTAN.

AMONG the illustrated books that were the delight of my childhood, was one containing a picture of St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of the Church in England. He was represented as of most venerable aspect, and writing with a style, or ancient pen. An account of this great man's life was also given with the picture; and besides the praise given to his fervent piety, his profound learning, his prudence and holy wisdom, he was said to have been an illuminator, as well as an accomplished transcriber or copyist, of sacred books. The volume containing all this was not a Catholic one, merely a popular magazine for children, scattered all over New England. I have often wondered if the other children in the neighborhood liked this picture as well as I did; if they remembered it; and if it was to them, as to me, a point of attraction, around which gathered, in after years, noble traditions and generous sentiments.

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St. Dunstan was a native of Glastonbury, "That holiest spot," it has been said, "in all England;" for there the faith was first planted by a person no less honorable than St. Joseph of Arimathea, that "rich man" and "noble counsellor," as he is called in the gospels, who assisted with his devout hands to take down the body of his Divine Lord from the cross, and, wrapping it in fine linen and the most costly spices, laid it in his own new tomb. Thirty years after he had earned, by this act of love, a place in the heart of every Christian, flying from the persecutions of his countrymen and taking with him, as his only treasure, a few drops of the Blood of his Redeemer, he landed on the western shore of England and found a peaceful asylum on an island surrounded by marshes. This island was called by the Britons, Avallona, or Isle-of-apples, because it abounded with apple-trees; and we are told that every year the island still blushes with the delicate bloom of its orchards. It is from the Britons themselves that we inherit the tradition of the landing of St. Joseph of Arimathea with his twelve companions; and of the drops of Precious Blood that he brought with him, preserved in the same chalice that was used by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, when he instituted the Holy Eucharist. This tradition of the chalice and its sacred contents, was kept alive in those poems celebrating the virtues of the "Knights of the Round Table" in King Arthur's time, all of whom ardently desired to possess this holy relic, called the *Saint Graal*, or "Holy Cup." To the

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Britons themselves, also, we trace back the lovely legend of the first miracle on British soil, performed by St. Joseph of Arimathea to save the souls of a few simple-minded savages, and thus laying deep in the national heart the seed of Christian faith which he had come to plant on that distant shore. Received with kindness by the Britons, he chose the first moment in which he saw them hesitating to believe what he was telling them of Christ and his religion, to confirm their faith by a miracle. Planting his pilgrim staff, cut from the same thorn tree of Palestine from which the Roman soldiers had gathered the thorns that crowned the head of Jesus in His sorrowful passion, into the unblessed, pagan soil, lo! the dry staff quickened at the prayer of this lover of souls, and sent forth leaf-buds into the cold December air; at sight of which the poor pagans fell at the feet of the messenger of the Prince of Peace, and were converted, listening with docility to the word he had come to preach to them. And not only did the thorn send out its tender leaf-buds, but it struck roots, strong and healthy roots, into the fresh British soil, blossoming, during fifteen hundred years, for the edification of the faithful, and is still to be seen by the pilgrim to the shrine of Glastonbury. Here, too, this same Joseph of Arimathea built a chapel out of the twisted and interlaced branches of the willow, and consecrated it to the Blessed Virgin; that Mother of Sorrows, to whose supernatural grief and supernatural fortitude he was an eye-witness, and

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which he must have carried in his memory, as a fountain of devotion, to his death.

Such was the beginning of the great abbey of Glastonbury; and tradition tells us that within its walls lies the dust of that spotless Christian knight, King Arthur; for, having been mortally wounded in one of those long battles between the Britons and their Saxon invaders which lasted three days and nights, he was carried to the good and faithful monks at Glastonbury, died with them, and was there secretly buried.

At Glastonbury, then, we might look for a saint; and it was in this old Christian town, sanctified by such precious memories, that St. Dunstan was born. The exact date of his birth does not seem to be known, but it was probably before 940, or in that tenth century, which has been called the darkest century of the Christian Church. Here, then, at Glastonbury, he was offered by his parents at the altar of Our Lady, and as soon as he could prattle was given over by them to the care of some Irish monks who settled in the deserted abbey, earning the bare necessaries of life by teaching the children of the neighborhood. Of these good monks he learned the doctrines of the Christian Church, and also the elements of sound scholarship. Centuries before the time of St. Dunstan there was a great school at Glastonbury. Students from Ireland and Scotland and France, as well as from England itself, came to Glastonbury to drink at its full fountain of learning. But Glastonbury had shared the fate of many other noble retreats for learning and piety during

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the invasions of the barbarians from the north of Europe; and what, in the time of Venerable Bede, as you have already seen in his life, was a centre of civilization and learning, being under the protection of a great religious community, was, at the time of St. Dunstan's birth, a melancholy home for a few monks, who showed their love for learning by teaching it to the young children around them. Most happy, however, were those "excellent masters of the sciences," those few monks at Glastonbury, for to them the providence of God committed the training of one of His noblest saints on the list of the British Isles. His extraordinary genius soon showed itself, and he outstripped his companions in every branch of study which had any interest for him. Thus accomplished in the learning of his age, and enjoying the advantages of his noble birth, he was taken to the court of the good king, Athelstan, by his uncle, Athelmus, archbishop of Canterbury. Athelstan, who was a lover of virtue and of learning, honored Dunstan with a regard above that which he gave to any other person at the court, which so excited the envy and jealousy of the ambitious courtiers that they did not hesitate to invent all sorts of malicious lies, charging Dunstan, even to the king, with the practice of sorcery; a foolish story founded upon his musical skill, by which he was said to bewitch the king; and they also accused him of a heathenish regard for the poetry of the old Saxon bards. After a short struggle to keep his high place at court against such enemies, he retired to the

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house of his relative, the bishop of Winchester. Here he had leisure to meditate upon the fleeting honors of a life in the world, and to lay out a holy plan for the future. The good providence of God did not forsake him under these misfortunes. His life had been one of singular devotion and purity, and although he was not willing to be driven from an honorable place near the king, to which his birth, his genius, and his learning gave him a just claim, he was far from any worldly habit of mind. While in these good dispositions a long and severe illness showed to him, as nothing else can, the nothingness of all earthly goods compared with heavenly ones; and on his recovery he offered himself to the bishop for the service of God. The habit of a monk in the order of priesthood was given to him, and he was sent to the very church in which he was baptized, and to the abbey where he had lived, as a child and a youth, with his old friends, the learned Irish monks of Glastonbury.

Before he left this school of religion and of letters, of science and of art, his skill in music, painting, engraving and working in metals, had won for him a wide-spread and just fame. Some of my readers may be surprised that a young man in the "Dark Ages," should have been encouraged to aspire to such a varied and noble culture, especially as he did not appear to have a vocation for a priestly or monastic life. We often hear people saying, that in those ages none but priests were allowed to be scholars; yet here is a young and elegant courtier coveting every accomplish-

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ment that could grace his rank at the present day. It was after he had learned, at the court of the good king, Athelstan, that "all is vanity" outside the service of God—which indeed none learn so well as those who have had enough of the pleasures and grandeurs of the world to know how hollow are all the appearances of such happiness, how far short of the desires of the human heart are all the contrivances of society for enjoyment—that Dunstan was ready to bring to the service of God, and to the service of the Church, the treasures he had received from his pious instructors. In the retirement of his monastic life at Glastonbury, we find him embellishing the Sacred Books with all the zeal, and patience, and industry, peculiar to the student-monk and ecclesiastic, of that period. He could, without wrong to any one, apply himself to the studies he so much loved, and to that art of the illuminator which was then devoted, in all its freshness and perfection, to the beautifying of the sacred text. The canonical books of the Bible, were, in those ages, laboriously written out by hand on vellum or parchment. The work of a copyist was considered a very responsible one, as the correctness of the sacred text was so easily impaired. To copy, perfectly, was a great merit; but, in addition to this, to design, and execute in the most brilliant and lasting colors, pictures illustrating the great events in the Old or New Testaments, was, in those ages of faith, looked upon as a labor receiving the choicest blessing of Heaven as its great, its only reward. At the present

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time, there is a general turning of amateur pencils and brushes to the imitating of these beautiful remains of the devotional art of the middle ages; but these feeble attempts have not the aim of those good monks to inspire them. Much as the nineteenth century boasts of its love for the Bible, it has never produced such decorations for the holy text as were executed, under the greatest inconveniences, by a set of men, whom the Reformation has branded as "ignorant of the Bible." Many of these mediæval artists were simple monks, peaceful, patient, laborious; but besides these, (who have not left an initial letter by which their works might be known, much less their names remembered), we find that more than one bishop of the Church was honored, as an illuminator of Scripture. In every convent were skillful masters of the pen and pencil, and a copy of the gospels is still preserved in the British Museum, with an inscription, telling us that it was "written by the hands of Eadfrith, that Bishop Ethelwald added the illuminations, whilst Bilfrid, the ankret, bound it in sheets of silver-gilt, and set it with jewels, and the priest Alfrid furnished the Anglo-Saxon Gloss" (*i. e.*, explanations or comments). As I have said, Dunstan, the profound scholar, the holy ecclesiastic, the companion of princes, the favorite of a good and learned king, had this praise added to the list of his many virtues, that he "*excelled* in illumination." In a manuscript in the Oxford Library there is a drawing from his hand, a figure of Jesus Christ appearing to Dunstan who is adoring at his feet. So

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enthusiastic was the regard entertained for these works of the devout illuminators, that, after death, the right hand which had wrought such glowing devices to illustrate the Word of God was often carefully embalmed.

But not in painting, alone, was Dunstan famous as an artist; he was also skilled in the working of precious metals for the sacred vessels, in designing embroideries for chasubles, and even in the casting of bells. * In reading the delightful annals of that century —delightful in spite of many sorrowful irregularities, since faith was still recognized and still lived out by Christians in all parts of Europe,—we often come upon passages that tell us of the priestly gifts of exquisitely wrought gold and silver altar ornaments, sent by Dunstan as the work of his own hands to some missionary friend in a wild country. It is said, that of the four large bells that afterwards adorned the new abbey church at Abingdon, two were cast by the hands of the abbot, and two, yet larger ones, were the handiwork of St. Dunstan. It was one of his delights, also, to carve in wood, to mould figures in clay and wax, and to engrave. Mention is made of a vestment embroiderd by a royal lady, Ethelfreda, for which St. Dunstan made the design. Indeed the art of designing, as well as the labor of the artistic workman, was encouraged in those ages by priests and monks of all ranks, as it gave them the recreation which every one needs, and also saved them from the dangers of idleness.

* The foundations of the Chapel of the Mother House of the Order of the Holy Child Jesus, Mayfield, England, stand on the site of St. Dunstan's home, and the nuns possess the anvil at which he worked with his own hands.

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In these peaceful and holy labors Dunstan passed his monastic life at Glastonbury, when the death of King Athelstan, and the coming to the throne of his brother Edmund, again drew him from his seclusion. Edmund's palace of Chedder was only nine miles from Glastonbury, and he often visited its old church with singular devotion. In this way he became acquainted with the sanctity of St. Dunstan, and, calling him back to the court, made him his chief counsellor, and gave him the territory of Glastonbury that he might be able to restore the abbey to its former splendor. Dunstan immediately collected a community, giving it the rule of St. Benedict; and, in doing this, he became the restorer of order, and the reviver of learning, in his native country.

Nothing could exceed the prudent zeal with which Dunstan brought back among the people the schools that had been destroyed by public calamities, and revived the seminaries for the education of priests in the new abbeys, springing up under his wise and vigorous government; and in these schools and seminaries some of the most famous ecclesiastics of that century received their education. St. Dunstan allowed the reading of the Latin poets, because, as he said, it polished the mind and improved the style; he also encouraged the study of Anglo-Saxon poetry, that his preachers might speak, eloquently, their native tongue. Science was not forgotten, and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music were carefully cultivated by his pupils, while many of them excelled in the art of

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painting, so especially beloved by their master. In the time of good King Alfred, who mourned over the low state of knowledge in his age, monks were despised, and few but ignorant and rude persons could be persuaded to wear a cowl. St. Dunstan turned the tide, and Glastonbury could soon found other houses and other schools from the ranks of its own well taught scholars. Among these scholars was Ethelwold, whose name is found, so often and so pleasantly, on the same page with St. Dunstan's, that we never see one without expecting to see the other. Ethelwold, too, was the abbot whose bells chimed in so sweetly with the bells of St. Dunstan from the towers of the new abbey. One of the graces for which the writers of that age tell us he was distinguished, was a peculiar charm of manner that drew to him the hearts of the young. To any one who is devoting a lifetime to the instruction of youth, nothing can be more gratifying than the honor and love manifested towards their teachers by the young of those distant, and (as we are so apt to believe) rude, times.

King Edmund reigned but six years and a half, and his two sons, Edwy and Edgar, being too young to govern, his nephew Edred was called to the throne, and his veneration for St. Dunstan was even greater than the veneration of his uncle, Edmund. To Edred succeeded the unworthy Edwy, a profligate youth, who on the very day of his coronation insulted the noble guests at his table. It was the courageous reproof given to him on that day by his royal father's

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old counsellor and dear friend, St. Dunstan, which the wicked Edwy could never forgive. St. Dunstan was obliged to escape to Flanders, and the two abbeys of Glastonbury and Abingdon, governed by Dunstan, were broken up, and the monks scattered by the order of the king. But his exile only served to spread abroad the sweet odor of his sanctity. At the church of St. Peter's, at Ghent, a vestment is still shown that was worn by St. Dunstan. As to Edwy, his people soon threw off the hateful hand of the tyrant, and set upon the throne his brother Edgar, who immediately called home our saint and promoted him to the same post of confidence that he had filled under his father and his uncle. He was soon made bishop of Worcester; two years later he was made primate, and going to Rome to receive the Pallium,* was sent home to England as the Apostolic Legate.

He was now in a position to carry out all his noble plans for the reformation of abuses, and the establishment of schools and seminaries. Everywhere new monasteries were springing up; the old abbeys of Ely, Peterborough, Malmsbury and Thorney, rose out of their ruins; and such was the eagerness of the king and of his people, that more than forty abbeys were founded or restored while St. Dunstan was primate. Can you believe that we are talking about a saint in the "Dark Ages?"

Besides these grand and imposing works he revived

* See *Pallium* in the life of St. Agnes.

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the parochial schools, required the priests to preach every Sunday to their flocks, and, in their schools, to teach their parish children grammar, the church-chant, and some useful trade. Do you think, my dear young readers, that these "Middle Age" children under the protection of the good primate, St. Dunstan, need much pity even from the children of the present day and in the United States?

It was during the life of St. Dunstan that the wishes of the good king, Alfred, or Alfred the Great as he is called, were really carried out, for in St. Dunstan's time, under his encouragement and that of his friend Ethelwold, everything was done to instruct the people in their own language. Besides translating several of the books of Scripture, Ælfric, one of Ethelwold's scholars, devoted to English literature, composed a Latin and English grammar, and other school-books, for the use of beginners. I cannot so much as name all the good works, to encourage learning and solid piety, performed, or inspired, by St. Dunstan. Good schools arose in every part of the kingdom, and the annals of Ramsey Abbey would interest my youngest reader, or—listener; for, many a little boy and girl who cannot yet read fast enough to read these pages for themselves, will, I hope, hear them read by some older child in the family. One pretty incident may touch the fancy of some good-hearted little rogue who is perhaps charged with all the mischief done in the house, and, sometimes is told that he is the naughtiest boy in the world and that every body despairs of him.

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If such a little boy gets hold of this book let him read for his comfort about four little fellows in the school of Ramsey Abbey.

"Four little boys, named Oswald, Etheric, Ædnoth and Athelstan, had been placed in the school by St. Oswald (a dear friend of St. Dunstan's), all being sons of powerful Saxon *thanes*, or lords. They were received before they were seven years old, and were of innocent manners and beautiful countenances. At certain times they were suffered by their master to go and play outside the cloister walls. One day, being thus sent out by themselves, they ran to the great west tower, and laying hold of the bell-rope, rang with all their might, but so unskilfully that one of the bells was cracked by the unusual motion. The mischief becoming known, the culprits were threatened with a sound flogging; a threat which occasioned abundance of tears. At last, remembering the sentence they had so often heard read from the rule of St. Benedict, 'If any one shall lose or break anything, let him hasten without delay to accuse himself of it,' they ran to the abbot, and, weeping bitterly, told him all that had happened. The good abbot pitied their distress, and calling the brethren together who were disposed to treat the matter rather severely, he said to them, 'These little innocents have committed a fault, but with no evil intention; they ought, therefore, to be spared, and when they grow up to be men it will be easy for them to make good the damage they have done.' Then dismissing the monks, he secretly ad-

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monished the boys how to disarm their anger; and they, following his directions, entered the church with bare feet, and there made their vow; and when they grew up to manhood and were raised to wealth and honor, they remembered what they had promised, and bestowed great benefits on the Church."

No doubt my little friends have often been told not to conceal any mischief they may have done, however grave, or, however unintentional; but they may not have supposed that St. Benedict would provide for accidents in a rule for monasteries. I hope the knowing this, and the success of the four little boys in the old abbey ofRamsey in escaping a whipping by obeying this rule, will fix it so tightly in the memory of every child who hears about it, that none of you will ever fail to accuse yourselves of all your mischief, and bear, bravely, your punishment, if you cannot get rid of it, rather than be a skulking coward of a child, to grow up into a mean, cowardly man, or a deceitful, cowardly woman, ready to tell all sorts of lies in order to cover up a poor little mistake, as well as some great blunder. Own up to all your mistakes and blunders, but never be a coward and, almost of course, a liar. I shudder when I remember all the misery, injustice, and heart-break, that has come on families, neighborhoods, and countries, by some cowardly act to save one's self from deserved blame. One hardly knows whether most to pity or to despise the person who can allow another, innocent, person, to suffer for his sin or his blunder. Of one thing, however, I am certain; St. Benedict

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pitied and despised such conduct as much as we possibly can, or he would never have made that splendid rule, "*Make haste* to accuse yourself if you have lost or have broken anything." Remember this as long as you live, and act upon it, and you will not suffer in purgatory for some mean sin of concealment, that perhaps seemed small, but which drew after it such consequences as make death-beds hard. Be good, courageous, noble-hearted Christian boys and girls, if you expect to look our dear Lord full in the face at your private, individual judgment; and though you may be obliged to stay awhile in purgatory, you will remember, all through its great pains, the dear, dear look in the eyes of your kind Judge, who hated lies and told who was the father of them.

You have, no doubt, conceived a high regard for King Edgar, under whose powerful protection St. Dunstan performed such prodigies of goodness and wisdom. I must now tell you of a great misfortune that befell Edgar. You may fancy that I shall tell you that an army of barbarians invaded his kingdom; or that some one of his household was treacherous; or that he lost his children. Any, or all, of these dreadful misfortunes might have come upon Edgar and it would not have been so terrible as this one—for he was so unfortunate as to fall into a terrible sin. I say, he was so unfortunate; because we cannot suppose that Edgar intended to commit such a crime, until his passions had blinded him to its enormity. In those early days of Christian civilization there were

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fewer social restraints upon the untamed passions of men, and especially of kings, than at present, when the laws of the land and of society have all been modeled, for many centuries, on the principles of Christian morality. Therefore the Christians of those days, and especially the kings, were more in danger of surprises, and were more exposed to falling into scandalous sins. King Edgar, then, as I have said, was surprised by a great temptation and he yielded to it. St. Dunstan immediately sought him out, and, with all the boldness of the prophet Nathan before King David, he remonstrated with him on his sin. The king, struck with remorse, begged, with many tears, that a suitable penance might be laid upon him, and St. Dunstan gave him a penance for seven years. During this time he was never to wear his crown, was to fast twice every week, and give large alms. He was also bound to build an extensive nunnery, in which Christian virgins might be consecrated to the service of God. These conditions the king faithfully kept, and founded a rich convent for nuns at Shaftsbury. When the seven years of his penance were over, St. Dunstan, in a public assembly of the lords and prelates, set the crown again upon his head, and thus gave, to the entire kingdom, an example against sin in high places.

We know that many persons, in this age of the world, would prefer to have a wicked king or ruler go on committing wickedness, to allowing the priests and bishops of the Church to have so great an in-

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fluence over him. But in England at that time all were glad that there was a spiritual power respected even by kings, and we, certainly, need not wish that Edgar had despised St. Dunstan or his counsels.

Notwithstanding the great labors connected with such a life as that of the holy archbishop of Canterbury, we read that he frequently visited the churches in all parts of the kingdom. Those who live in large cities, surrounded by the luxuries of religion, often forget the privations and irregularities suffered by those who live in some far off corner of a diocese or province; and also forget the pleasure felt by the pastors and inhabitants, of these lonely districts, when they find themselves, and their interests, affectionately remembered by their superiors. It puts new heart and life into their labors, and they meet with courage, after such a visit, what before overwhelmed them. On these pastoral visits St. Dunstan preached often and with great eloquence; and few were so hardened as to resist his appeals. He employed all his revenues for the relief of the poor, and no heart in all England was more tender towards the suffering than that of its great primate. But neither the care of the churches, the monasteries, the schools, nor the attendance upon the king, nor even the necessities of the poor, ever made him neglect his prayers and meditations; and after the occupations of his crowded day were over, he watched late into the night in communion with God. Glastonbury was his dearest solitude, and thither he would often retire from the world to give himself up

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to heavenly contemplation. When at Canterbury it was his custom, even in the coldest weather, to visit the church of St. Austin (or St. Augustine, apostle of England), outside the walls, and that of the Blessed Virgin adjoining it.

We must now see how this good man died. 'In 988 St. Dunstan had grown very feeble, and the feast of the Ascension in that year was the last day on which his voice was heard in the solemnities of his cathedral. On that day, after the reading of the gospel, he walked in state from the vestry to the pulpit, and preached with surpassing energy on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the redemption of man and the bliss of heaven. He then went on with the mass until the end of the *Pater Noster* when he again turned to his people, exhorting them to follow their head and leader to the realms of happiness, and pronounced over them the episcopal benediction. After the kiss of peace he addressed them a third time, as if his heart yearned towards them, and begged them to remember him when he was gone; for he felt that his hour of death was very near, and that he should see them no more in this world. The tears of the clergy and of the people proved their affection for this venerable saint, to whom they all owed so much. He concluded the mass and had sufficient strength to take his usual place at the table in the hall for the festal banquet. After dinner he returned to the church, pointed out the spot in which he was to be buried, and then withdrew to his chamber, where he spent that day and the

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next in acts of devotion, and in advising and consoling those who visited him. On the Saturday after the Ascension, mass was celebrated in his room by his own order, and as soon as he had received the communion he burst into the following prayer: "Glory be to thee, Almighty Father, that hast given the bread of life from heaven to those who fear thee; that we may be mindful of thy wonderful mercy to man in the Incarnation of thine only-begotten Son, born of the Virgin. To thee Holy Father, for that when we were not thou didst give to us a being, and when we were sinners didst grant to us a Redeemer, we give due thanks through the same thy Son, our Lord and God, who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, maketh all things, governeth all things, and liveth through ages and ages, without end." Soon after this, on the 19th of May, the day on which the Church still honors him in her office, he calmly expired, it being the sixty-fourth, or the sixty-fifth, year of his age, and the twenty-seventh of his life as archbishop.' He was buried in his own cathedral, in the place he had appointed, though it is probable that some part of his relics were taken to his beloved Glastonbury.

In St. Dunstan we see the model of a monk, priest, bishop. The goods of this world, which he always possessed in abundance, were used for the highest and noblest interests of the Church, of God, and of the laity who make up so large a part of that Church. Our Lord said, "He that would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all;" and it was by his

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right royal service towards the necessities of the Church and the people, that St. Dunstan became "a great priest, who in his day served God, and none was found like to him who kept the law of the Most High."

Let us then invoke, with deep devotion, the revered name of that saint whose holy life we have been following, saying with humility, "Pray for us, holy St. Dunstan, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ;" that we too may be faithful servants in our day and generation and win, by that service, the "Well done, good and faithful servant." Then, my dear children, whether, as the years go on, you belong to the flocks, or to the pastors, or to the bishops, of the Church of God, whatever afflictions or disappointments may await you here, you may be sure of a crown of glory and the everlasting peace of the faithful servants of God, and of His Church.

THE BELLS OF ABINGDON.

Ting—ting—yet never a tinkle;
Ring—ring—yet never a sound
Stirs the beds of periwinkle,
Stirs the ivy climbing round
The belfry-tower of well-hewn stone,
Where, ages ago, at Abingdon,

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Saint Dunstan's bells, with Saint Ethelwold's hung;
Hung and swung;
Swung and rung;
Rung,
Each with its marvellous choral tongue,
Matins and Lauds, and the hour of Prime,
Terce, Sext, and None, till the Vesper hymn
Was heard from the monks in their stalls so dim;
Then lent their chime
To the solemn chorus of Compline time.
And blessed was he, or yeoman or lord,
Who, with stout bow armed or with goodly sword,
Heard, at the hour,
Those wonderful bells of sweetness and power;
And, crossing himself with the sign of peace,
Had his Pater and Ave said at their cease.

Ting—ting—yet never a tinkle;
Ring—ring—yet never a sound
Stirs the beds of periwinkle,
Stirs the ivy creeping round,
Creeping, creeping, over the ground,
As if to hide
From the eye of man his own rapine and pride.
Matins, and Lauds, and the hour of Prime;
Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline time,
Unrung,
Unsung;
The bells and the friars
Alike in their graves; and the tangled briers

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Bud in May, blush with blossoms in June,
Where the bells, that once were all in tune,
Moulder beneath the ivy vines;
Only, as summer day declines,
The peasants hear,
With pious fear,
Ting—ting—yet never a tinkle,
Ring—ring—yet never a sound,
Where, in their beds of periwinkle,
And ivy close to the ground,
Saint Dunstan's bells, with Saint Ethelwold's, keep
A silent tongue while the good monks sleep.



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ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA.

MANY, I hope most, of my little readers have heard of St. Anthony of Padua. I say, I hope; for he was not only a very lovely, but a very powerful saint; by which I mean that he has obtained many great blessings for those who have been faithful to ask his prayers.

St. Anthony was born at Lisbon, Portugal, in the year 1195. He became a monk of the Order of Friars Minor, founded by St. Francis of Assisi, in Padua, Italy, and died near that city, June 13, 1231. In this city of Padua, where his relics are still kept with great care, and piously honored, were wrought the most splendid miracles of St. Anthony after his death. A few of these I have selected for this sketch, but by far the greater number must be left for you to gather, with delight, from the Lives of the Saints by Alban Butler, or from still more charming and complete biographies of this dear saint of happy Padua.

Happy Padua! Have you ever thought, dear children, how happy that city must be, in which such

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miracles are worked as the curing of sick people whom no physician can help, the recovery of lame, blind and paralyzed persons, and, what is far more wonderful, the curing of great sinners; for sin is the worst of all diseases, the saddest of all sicknesses.

But what I have at heart to-day in writing about St. Anthony, is this; to let you know that St. Anthony is not only the benefactor of Padua, but of all who ask him for his prayers faithfully and affectionately. Remember, *affectionately*. I am quite sure that St. Anthony likes to have us ask him for favors in this way, and I have a notion that most of the saints feel on this point like St. Anthony. It is not courteous for us to say, "Saint So-and-so, get us this, or that, or the other, blessing we want," like a boor, or an ill-natured person, who wishes us to do something for him. The saints really wish to have us love them, not for their own satisfaction, but because they, being the friends of God, sincerely love Him, and desire to see Him loved by others; and if we love the friends of God we shall soon come to loving God Himself, which is exactly what the saints want. It is because love, love for God, and for His friends, is the disposition which brings with it peculiar and great blessings, that St. Anthony, and all the saints I have ever heard of, like to have us ask them to pray for us, and get blessings and mercies, and saving graces for us, as we would ask our dear friends to help us or please us; to say "*Dear* St. Anthony," or "Dear St. Agnes," or "Dear St. Elizabeth," or "Dear St. Aloysius;" and, if we

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have a medal or a picture of the saint, to kiss it with affectionate veneration. At such signs of love on our part, they are very likely to be moved to great tenderness towards us, and we are pretty sure to get what we ask for.

I believe, little children, that I have given you a very good rule as to the spirit, and manner, in which you are to ask favors of the saints, those kind and powerful friends of God, and of us poor "sinners in this valley of tears."

I will now give you an example, not very far from home, of the success of this way of asking for favors through the prayers of the saints.

More than fifteen years ago, (it does not seem so long ago, so fresh is all I remember of her in my mind,) there lived, in the city of Philadelphia, a little girl, hardly ten years old. I might tell you of the many charming qualities of my little friend, her amiability, her winning ways, her gifts of mind and heart, but, most of all, her tender, practical piety. She had learned from the saints, and from the saint who was her confessor, a bishop and a great theologian, how to love God; and in return for this help which they had given her, she dearly loved her friends, the saints of God. Among these friends her special friend was, as she used to call him, "*Dear* St. Anthony of Padua," that old, old saint, who lived so long ago as 1195. What could such an old saint care about our little girl, only ten years old, living, not in Padua, but in the United States, and in that Quaker city, Phila-

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delphia? Yet little Mary not only loved St. Anthony, but St. Anthony dearly loved little Mary, as was proved by the ready way he had of getting her everything she asked for.

When I say, everything, you must remember that our little Mary was a child who asked only for such things as God would wish her, or her friends, to have, and asked for them only for the supernatural reason of bringing, in the end, glory to God and to His saints. Therefore, when her little brother said to her, "Now, Mary, pray to St. Anthony to find the penny I have lost," she reproved him, saying, "Your penny is not necessary for you, and perhaps you will be better without it."

One blessing little Mary was always begging of St. Anthony, which was, to find lost souls, the souls of sinful or of unbelieving people, and especially of Catholics who believed but did not practice their religion. Many such souls were saved by the prayers of St. Anthony, urged on by the prayers of little Mary.

Now comes a wonderful part of this devotion practiced by our little friend. She only lived to one month of thirteen years, dying in the odor of youthful sanctity, her holy confessor declaring, that he "believed she passed straight from earth to the immediate presence of God," the object of her love. To her parents and friends she left her devotion to St. Anthony; and the Novena of Nine Tuesdays to this saint, and a medal in his honor, have, through them, come into general use. Favors and blessings beyond counting

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have been given, in answer to the faithful practice of this Novena, to those who ask St. Anthony to find, not only lost watches, lost health, lost good of all sorts, but, above all, lost souls. Bishops, priests, monks, and nuns, have caught a new love for St. Anthony, and a fresh confidence in the intercession of saints, from the example of this little girl, to whom St. Anthony has shown so many favors even since her death.

Remember, my dear children. that the great saints you read of are as powerful to-day as they were ages ago; and that if you are not oftener helped by their prayers, it is because you forget to ask for them, or ask for them but coldly, and with but little faith.

One more American story of St. Anthony. The late Bishop Neumann, of Philadelphia, a most holy man, some years before his death, lost, in an unaccountable way, not only a very choice collection of theological books, but a great number of precious relics. The good prelate was very much grieved, especially for the loss of the relics, and immediately began a Novena to St. Anthony of Padua. He also promised, that, if these treasures were found, he would have a picture painted in honor of St. Anthony. Hardly were the Nine Tuesdays of the Novena over, when the books and relics were restored to him as mysteriously as they had disappeared. The bishop, who knew how to be grateful for favors, as well as how to ask for them, kept, to the end of his life, an affectionate devotion to St. Anthony, and I have, still, one of the pictures of our saint which he brought,

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himself, from Padua. I have also a medal of St. Anthony, brought from Padua by a Protestant lady, who visited that city almost solely out of respect to St. Anthony; also, a Jerusalem medal of St. Anthony, the head of the saint being rudely carved in the soft, pearl-tinted gypsum of the Holy Land.

Bishop Neumann and little Mary learned the lessons of faith on different continents, but the devotion was as earnest and sincere in one as in the other. The learned bishop, learned, not only in theology but in science, was, like the little girl, simple-hearted enough to believe in the prayers of our saint.

You may like to know how St. Anthony, who was born in Portugal and lived there until he was more than twenty, should have spent the most wonderful years of his life in Italy. Prince Pedro, of Portugal, brought over from Morocco the relics of five Franciscans who had found a martyr's crown in that barbarous country, which so touched the heart of our saint, that he wished only to be a martyr. Very soon after, some Franciscan friars came to the convent where he was, to beg an alms. He told these poor friars what was his holy ambition, and they encouraged him to join their Order, which was more severe than the one he was then in. After a long time his prior consented to this change, and he took the poor habit of St. Francis, with the cord, and had leave given him to go to Africa to preach the Gospel to the Moors, where it might be, he would get his dear wish—to die a martyr. But sickness obliged him to return to Spain, and

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on his way back contrary winds drove him to Messina, on the Island of Sicily, where he heard that St. Francis was at Assisi. Weak and sick as he was, he could not resist his desire to see this living saint, the founder of his chosen Order. When he had once seen St. Francis he wished to be always near him, and thus his sanctity and learning became known to St. Francis, who appointed him to the study, and afterwards to the teaching, of theology. The wisdom of St. Francis was acknowledged by every one who ever listened to the preaching of St. Anthony, for he was eloquent, not only according to the eloquence of this world and the judgment of men, but according to that other and higher sense, in which eloquence draws sinners from the love of perishable good and vanities, to the love of eternal good; it was in this sense, as well as in a worldly one, that St. Anthony was called, by all the men of his generation, a most eloquent preacher.

Many of St. Anthony's sermons were illustrated by images drawn from the beautiful world around him; for, like St. Francis, he was a man of tender heart, that overflowed with love even for inanimate things, since they were made by the finger of God Himself. Our Blessed Saviour stopped in one of His sermons to praise the "lilies of the field," and we read that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was rapt to an ecstacy by the beauty of a flower. St. Anthony not only loved these delicate beauties of nature, but he loved animals, especially those animals common among men. To this day the domestic animals in Italy are blessed, in

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honor of St. Anthony. The whiteness and the gentleness of the swans, the kindness of those strange birds, the storks, to each other, roused his admiration, and the very fishes drew him to the shores and river banks by his love for them. One day, when he had been preaching to the people of the city of Rimini about repentance and a new life, they stopped their ears and would not hear him; which, St. Anthony seeing, he went to the sea-shore, and stretching forth his hand, he said, "Hear me, ye fishes, for those unbelievers will not listen;" and an infinite number of fishes, both great and small, lifted their heads above the water and listened to the sermon of the saint in praise of their Creator. There is no such simplicity as the simplicity of the saints, and none prize, as the saints prize, the least thing made by the hand of God. I have often seen pretty and modest bunches of fresh and fragrant flowers from the garden, or the fields, or even green-houses, taken away from the altars, or put one side as hardly worthy of a place there, and artificial flowers put in their stead; as if any mortal hand, however skillful, could equal the lovely creations of God's own fingers! The saints understand this difference between the poor imitations of men, and the wonderful works of the Creator, and they would choose, for His altars, the humblest blossom of the field made by Him, to the most cunningly manufactured flower of paper, or muslin, or even wax. Its perfume, they know, will go up to its Creator like sweet incense, and the devout admiration of His beauti-

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ful handiwork is, in itself, an act of worship. Therefore, for your own little altars choose the meekest spring violet of the meadows, the wild rose and fragrant clover-tufts of summer, the many-hued asters and golden-rod of the hedges in autumn, instead of the costliest artificial flowers you can ever buy; because these little flowers, although so modest, are the works of God, and are the most worthy of a place on His altars. And, if you are ever allowed the great and sacred privilege of adorning the altars in the church, do not let your first thought be, how the altars will look to the people in the pews; but how the flowers, and the candles, and the garlands, will express your adoration for the Blessed Sacrament, and your veneration for the Blessed Virgin, for St. Joseph, or for the saint in whose honor the altar was raised. Let this be your *first* thought, and then you will be quite sure to put your choicest natural flowers about the Tabernacle; or, at the Benediction, near the Remonstrance; and, on the side altars, you will put a sweet nosegay at the feet of Our Lady, or of St. Joseph, in place of a bunch of staring, scentless, artificial roses; and instead of a heavy garland of muslin buds and leaves, a vine of living ivy will wander gracefully among the delicate carving of the altar niches, beautifying everything, hiding nothing. Do not be afraid of, sometimes, spending a little more money than people who like artificial flowers will approve of; for, before the year ends, they will spend more money at the milliner's than you will at the gardener's or the florist's; and if

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you really love the altar, you will raise some plants for it yourself, so that on great feast-days you can lend them to the altar; or, when a pretty plant blooms out, you can place it on the altar for some pious intention.

St. Anthony died at the early age of thiry-six, after ten years of holy labor in the Order of St. Francis. He died while reciting his favorite hymn to the Blessed Virgin,—"O gloriosa Domina," which, with the Breviary Hymns to St. Anthony and the collects, makes up the Nine Tuesdays Novena.

It is said that the children, on the first news of the death of Anthony, ran through the streets of Padua, crying, "The saint is dead, the saint is dead!" by which we can see how much he was beloved by children in his life time. No wonder, then, that little Mary loved him so well.

So many were the proofs of his sanctity that within a year after his death he was canonized by Pope Gregory IX, and the grateful people of Padua said a church should be built in his honor by the city. The great Niccola Pisano planned and began this church in 1237; but it was not finished for two hundred years, and we are told that "in all Italy there is not a church more rich in works of ancient and modern art than this one of St. Anthony."

Although I have left you to read for yourselves many of the wonders concerning St. Anthony, I have two narratives which have been selected for these pages by the parents of little Mary, and translated by her sister, from the life of St. Anthony by Azevedo,

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a Jesuit. The first is the account given by him of the miraculous cure of the Infanta, or the daughter of of the Queen of Portugal.

"The Infanta was already in a dying condition, but the Queen, her mother, in the midst of her distress did not cease recommending her to St. Anthony; and when she heard the physicians declare there was no longer any hope, she began to expostulate with the saint, in whom she still confided with as lively a faith as before: "Is it possible," she cried, "that you are so full of kindness to all that have a devotion to you, in every other part of the world, and yet can show yourself so cruel to your own country alone? Do you keep your ears always open to strangers, and do you mean to close them to us, who are your own people? No, no, it cannot be. When, upon the day of your canonization, you struck the bells of Lisbon with an invisible hand, and made them all ring at once, was it not solely for the purpose of inviting *us* in particular to have recourse to you, no longer indeed a living subject of this realm upon earth, but a protector in the heavens as full of love as of power?" Such earnest appeals the good Queen kept continually repeating, more with the heart, to be sure, than with the lips. But at a moment, when, for a short space, the mother had torn herself away from the bedside to give freer course to her tears, the saint appeared to the Infanta, in a halo of light, and asked her: "Dost thou know me?" She raised her eyes and recognized her deliverer; and, with transports of joy, seized with her hand, and kissed

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with veneration, the cord of St. Francis, which he wore. Whereupon the saint continued: "God sends me to console thee, and to offer thee the choice, which He gives thee to make and me to grant, either to die now and come with me instantly to Paradise, or to live for the consolation of thy father and mother and be instantly cured." The child, either from inconsiderateness, or because she could think of nothing but comforting her disconsolate mother, made her choice to live; and the saint added: "Well, then, rise from thy bed, for thou art already cured." And so it was. She immediately called out aloud for her mother: "My Saint has cured me: look at him, for I am holding him by the cord of his habit." The Queen ran to her daughter; she did not see the saint, because he had already disappeared, but she found that her daughter, so full of joy at having seen St. Anthony, had really been perfectly cured; and she published abroad the grace thus received in every direction."

The second narrative explains the picture of St. Anthony which accompanies this sketch of his life, and I shall give it to you as it has been sent to me, only leaving out what is not necessary for understanding the miracle, and the picture.

"The Order of Friars Minor, at that time, had no house of their own in Padua, and the convent of Arcella, a mile from the city, was an inconvenient residence for our saint. There were many who would have given him a lodging and who would have entreated him to make use of their own. This privilege,

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however, fell to the lot of a pious burgher, who set apart for the saint a chamber, quite by itself, in which he could abandon himself to his pious exercises without being in any way disturbed. This burgher, Count Tiso, having become the devoted personal friend of Antony, conceived also a profound veneration for his incomparable sanctity. He took careful note of whatever act or word of his holy guest he saw or heard; and he often watched at the door of the chamber, when Anthony had withdrawn to it to pray. One day Count Tiso, having seen some extraordinary rays of light stream forth from the chamber, ran to the door and saw the saint holding in his arms a pretty child, and the child returning his embrace with tender caresses. Tiso stood mute with wonder, and began to reason within himself, by whose agency and in what manner that unknown child had been brought into the chamber, and how the chamber could have come to shine with a light so extraordinary. The wonder grew to be still greater when he observed with what inexpressible majesty the tender caresses of the child were accompanied, and with what sweet ravishment Antony was carried away, as in an ecstacy; from which he finally concluded that the thing was from God, and that it was Jesus Christ who had made himself visible to our saint, in the likeness of a child, in order to refresh and console him with heavenly delights, for the labors and fatigues which he was enduring for His glory. While the count was lost in wondering observation of the heavenly sight, the child disappeared. Presently, An-

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tony roused himself from his ecstacy, and going forth from the chamber, came upon his friend as he stood, and gave him to understand, that he was already aware of his having been a witness of the vision, with the earnest entreaty that he would tell it to no one. So the count promised, and did, (in fact) *keep* his promise, so long as the saint was alive; but after the servant of God had died, the count published the fact, in order to give due honor to his friend; and, as often as he was enquired of about it, he repeated the story with such an abundance of tears, as bore witness to the effect which the vision had wrought upon him.

"Such is the way in which this most wonderful occurrence is related in all the ancient histories of our saint's life, with the addition, however, of certain other particulars, which are in the highest degree worthy of belief and of repetition. One is, that the pious, unseen observer of the vision was made sure that the child was Jesus, by a mass of light which was sent forth by its Divine body, but which, while it sent consolation to his heart, did not dazzle his sight. Another is, that the Child himself revealed to his beloved-one who it was, that was watching him, and pointed towards the aperture through which the sight was taken; and that the saint made no movement towards his friend, in order not to deprive him of this celestial consolation until the vision should have ceased. The *third* is, that the Holy Child appeared upon a book—a circumstance which became so celebrated and characteristic, that the saint began at once to be

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represented in pictures with the Child standing on his Breviary. The earliest authors observe that these circumstances were never called in question, such regard was had to the character of the burgher, who was noted in those times for probity, for veracity, and for the abundant tears of tenderness and devotion, with which he was accustomed to relate them."

The picture of St. Anthony will seem still more beautiful to you, I hope, after reading this account of the miraculous vision which it commemorates. Murillo, the great Spanish master, painted this charming subject nine times, and one of these pictures is still in the cathedral at Seville. The lilies, which you see in the hand of St. Anthony, belong to him by the common consent of all the artists who have painted him.

Remember that the Feast of St. Anthony of Padua, who was so beloved by little Mary of Philadelphia, as well as by the young princess of Portugal, is on the 13th of June. On that day let your prayers obtain his aid, not only for the recovery of lost treasures, and the precious things of this world, health or the use of maimed limbs, but the infinitely precious treasures of innocence, piety, holy fervor and sincere contrition, for those who may have lost them, either through carelessness or misfortune. By doing this you will honor St. Anthony, and, in proportion to your love for him and confidence in him, will be his love for you, my dear little reader.

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SAINT ALOYSIUS.

OF all the graces that our Blessed Lord has given to His saints as marks of His peculiar regard, none has ever moved even the worldly, and those who have grown old in sin, to envy and to a secret loathing of their unworthy lives, so much as the grace of youthful sanctity. It has all the endearing loveliness, all the chaste fragrance, of early spring flowers; of those violets and anemonies, and tiny, four-petaled, azure blossoms we call Innocence, that besprinkle the low hillsides and meadows in the month of May. God has so many endearing ways of drawing our hearts that the only wonder is, why all youths are not good, and all maidens are not holy; and the wonder seems still greater, when we read the life of such a saint as St. Aloysius (or Lewis) Gonzaga.

You have heard of boys, perhaps you have seen them, perhaps you have been in the same class with them at school, or they may have been among the boys of your set out of school, who seemed proud of

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being irreligious, undevout, and even of being boldly profane. How must such unhappy children stand abashed before the life-long contrition of St. Aloysius, who, having repeated, without knowing their meaning, some profane words that had been used before him, never forgave himself, and continued to shed tears of pious sorrow for a fault for which he was not accountable!

There are children, sad to say, there are men and women, who, because they may have wealth or a high position in society, consider themselves above the practices of devotion. If they go to mass on Sundays, and perform in a decent manner the duties that all Catholics must perform, if they hope to be saved, they are contented. They smile at the devotion of those around them, as if such piety was only practiced by the poor, the uneducated, or the weak-minded. They care more for the respect of their miserable, dying fellow-mortals, than for the smile of God or the everlasting joys of Heaven. How contemptible, how short-sighted, is this judgment, compared with the angelic wisdom of Aloysius, who, born to honors and grandeur, the favorite companion of a young prince, found his highest happiness in speaking to God in prayer, and who obtained, after the most affectionate entreaties, the consent of his father, the Marquis of Castiglione, to give up his titles and riches to his younger brother, Ralph, while he entered, as a novice, the Society of Jesus.

If you have no such sacrifices to make, at least offer

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the little you have to give to your Maker, your Redeemer; and, instead of fancying that you honor your Church by attending coldly on her beautiful rites, esteem it your highest honor, your noblest privilege, to practice as many of her devotions as your circumstances allow; and, above all, believe that the best proof you can give of your spotless honor, as Christian knights, is to present, from your earliest years, the fealty due from us all to the King of kings, the Lord of lords. This is the true knighthood, the only true nobility of Christendom; and its glorious ranks have been, and are still, filled from every class and position of life—slaves, beggars, servants, artisans, broad landholders, successful military leaders, the learned of all professions, civil rulers, and crowned potentates. The present generation may not always know who are its real heroes; the Church and the ages give a sure verdict.

The virtues most dear to the heart of Aloysius were humility and obedience. His tender humility was the guard of his youthful purity, which he prized, above all the desire of knowledge natural to his age, all the delight in art, all the pleasures of social intercourse. To preserve this, he was ready to be blind to all that youth admires, to keep a guard over his ears, his every sense. Beautiful innocence, which made him a fit companion for angels, and won for him a speedy entrance into their blissful society!

His devotion to our Blessed Lady was inspired by his love for his Divine Master. With Jesus he loved

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to converse before all others; and to the Mother of Jesus he rendered that affection, and veneration, which the love of Jesus must always kindle; for who can know and love Jesus, and not wish to know, to love, and be loved in return by, His Mother?

Aloysius brought on his death-sickness by attending upon the victims of a fearful epidemic in Rome; for, although he recovered from the epidemic, he never regained his strength. Permitted by God to have a fore-knowledge of his death, he received with joy, on the octave of Corpus Christi, the last sacraments, and entered, in a few hours, on the eternal vision of Him, whom he had so often received under the veil of the Blessed Sacrament with ecstacies of pious joy. He expired at midnight, between the 20th and 21st of June, 1591, being a little more than twenty-three years of age.

Among the beautiful groves of an Institution devoted to the education of youth, are several small chapels, placed there with the wisely directed intention of arousing and keeping alive those religious affections that are so easily discovered in the young, and only need to be cultivated to become fruitful in all manly virtues. In these groves one is led along walks named after the incidents that marked the passion of our Redeemer, to the foot of a tall cross, and then down by a winding path to a grotto, which is a copy of the Holy Sepulchre; not as it is seen at the present day, but as it must have been when the holy women and the disciples visited it on the first Easter morning, more

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than eighteen hundred years ago. Inside the chapel one sees the reed which this King of kings carried as a sceptre in His humiliation, the sponge soaked in myrrh and vinegar that was laid to His parched lips during those three hours of agony, the gross, cruel nail that entered His hands and His feet, and the crown of sharp thorns that bound His temples and sent its anguish through His brain*—everything in this narrow grotto speaks of His sorrowful passion and cruel death; now, indeed, forever past, yet forever present to the faithful hearts that try to make Him some reparation for all His woes.

It was a lovely summer morning when I took this walk through the winding paths, in company with a Sister of the Holy Cross, whose *compassion*ate hand had eased the pain of many a wounded soldier, had smoothed his dying pillow, and, better still, had prepared him for his great change. The sister turning into a by-path, we found ourselves in a dense part of the wood, and at the entrance of one of the plainest of the chapels. The door stood open, but, to preserve its privacy a curtain of purple cambric fell before it. The sister held it softly aside, and we kneeled down in a place of wonderful, tender solemnity. I had no thought, at first, as to the means by which this effect was produced; the impulse was to yield to it without a question. Everything, even to the altar and its

*Not the same sponge, reed, crown of thorns or gross nail, but similar to them, to bring back to us the reality of His sufferings. The nail, however, is exactly after the size and shape of the one found, by the Empress Helena, with the *True Cross*.

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decorations, was plain almost to poverty; but from above the altar came a soft stream of purple light, and amid the violet-tinted, misty radiance, like a vision, white as moonlight, was the image of our Blessed Lady! I did not realize until we were quite outside the chapel, that this was the only light admitted. Then there came over me another recollection—I had seen, just outside the altar-rail on the left, a mere bit of a shrine, hung, as it were, on the wall, and on it a statue of my favorite, St. Aloysius. This, then, was the Chapel of St. Aloysius! and, although we had walked on a few paces, I begged the sister to return with me: I could not leave it without daguerreotyping, forever, on my memory, the profoundly religious solemnity of this simple interior, and (shall I add?) without kneeling again, for a few minutes, before this humble shrine of the innocent penitent, Aloysius, to engage his prayers for certain little ones, for whom the world is waiting, it may be, to harm their tender innocence. I will trust that the lingering moment won its pleaded grace.

St. Aloysius has always been a favorite with artists. The figure of the angelic youth, bending over his crucifix with a look of love that vainly tries to express itself, of love that is also reparation, of innocence bathed in tears of contrition, is one of the triumphs of religious art.

The learned and holy confessors of St. Aloysius, among whom was Cardinal Bellarmin, declared after his death their firm belief that he had never offended

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God, mortally, in his whole life; yet, my dear children, while a child, youth, and young man, he never ceased to bewail his offences against his good God. What then shall we, who have so often and so grievously offended, who have done so little, hitherto, to atone for our offences, what must we think of our unfeeling indifference to our past sins, our short sorrow, if we have, indeed, sorrowed at all, and our unwillingness to make any reparation for them? Let us repeat, with all the contrition possible, the collect used by the Church on the feast of this innocent penitent to obtain the grace of an abiding, habitual sorrow for all our sins:

"O God, the giver of heavenly gifts, who in the angelic youth, Aloysius, didst unite a marvellous innocence of life with equally marvellous penance; grant that through his merits and prayers, we, who have failed to follow the pattern of his innocence, may imitate him in his penance."

Another prayer, in the Office for the feast of St. Aloysius, is too remarkable not to be familiar to all of us:

"Grant us, O Lord, to sit down at the heavenly banquet clothed in the wedding-garment; which the pious preparation and continual tears of blessed Aloysius, adorned with inestimable pearls."

Let me beg of you, my young readers, not to think lightly of, what older people may call, your *little* sins. Aloysius mourned for sins committed before he was seven years old. Pray often in the words of the Psalmist David, "From the sins of my youth deliver me, O Lord."

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SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL.

EVERY child who reads these pages has heard of St. Vincent de Paul. The Society of St. Vincent for the relief of the poor, the sick, the needy of all sorts, as it is found in nearly every parish in America, has made you familiar with the spirit of charity, of tender compassion, and of lively sympathy with the sorrows and misfortunes of all mankind, which set its shining mark upon Vincent as a saint, and is fixed, like a seal, upon the Orders that sprang from his root. In one sense all the saints of God are happy. There is no real happiness out of the service of God, inasmuch as we have been created expressly for His service; and no man, no woman, no child, no, not even an animal, can be happy unless doing what he has been created to do. The saints of God are doing precisely what they were created to do, loving and serving God, even when they seemed to be quite taken up with loving and serving their fellow beings; and they are, of all men, the most truly happy.

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The lives of many of the saints have been so full of painful mortifications, grievances, persecutions, calumnies, and sorrows of every sort, that it would be hard for girls and boys to call them happy, but I think any of you would call St. Vincent a happy man, notwithstanding the troubles that overtook him; for he bore them all with so sweet a spirit, such an air of cheerfulness surrounds him even while a slave, and under unjust suspicions, that we almost forget how painful those trials must have been; and then the religious Orders founded by St. Vincent of Paul have a peculiar cheerfulness about them, which we may suppose was one of the holy charms of their model and founder.

I wish you, dear children, to understand what really makes a saint, and to judge the saints, and their actions, not by the rule of this world, but by the rule of God as made known by His Church. Thus, while one saint may be leading a silent life in his monastery, spending his time in meditation and prayer, or even like St. Simon Stylites—who lived seven years on the top of a pillar without shelter from sun or storm, thus preaching a perpetual sermon to the luxurious generation around him, upon the meanness of the body and its comforts compared with the soul and its eternal rewards—another saint is living in the world, mixing in its affairs, its governments, wearing the same dress as his neighbors, hardly differing, to a common observer, from those around him, appearing to be occupied with the duties of his trade, his profession, his business, serving his neighbors with readiness and amiability,

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judging their actions with charity, relieving, without noise or parade, the poor, the sick, the afflicted, unwearied in praying for sinners, in converting the erring, and protecting the innocent. Both, my dear children, are saints, for both pray and work from one motive, the love of God; seasoning all prayer, all work, all recreation, by this ejaculation, this arrow of love sent from the heart of the creature to the heart of the Creator, and which is like a perpetual holocaust of that heart to God, "All for thee, my Jesus, my Jesus, all for thee! My Lord and my God, my God and my all!"

Protestants very often prefer one saint to another, and praise, almost always, those saints who do outward works of mercy, and even think lightly of the merits of the meditative saints. Catholics, however, if they pay any attention to the mind of the Church in these things, passing, as she does, a perfect and just judgment upon the virtues of her children, will never, in this sense, prefer one saint to another; but will rather adore God in the different graces and virtues of His saints, and try to imitate them by performing all the duties of their station, however lofty, or however humble, from the same motive which governed them, *the supreme love of God.*

Vincent was born in the year 1576, in the village of Pouii, near Acqs in Gascony, France, not far from the Pyrenees mountains. His parents, William de Paul and Bertranda de Morass, lived on a very small farm, and on the produce of this farm they brought up four

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sons and two daughters, innocent, ignorant of the follies of the great world, and taught to perform all the labors falling to their lot with cheerfulness. The third son, Vincent, spent a great part of his time in the field, tending cattle, and this time he also used for prayer and meditation; for from his earliest years he had shown a seriousness, and an affection for prayer, beyond his age. In this humble life he also found those for whose comfort he could sacrifice some of his own; for, from his good parents, he had learned the secret of Christian charity.

In this quiet and laborious life, too, with so little to excite intellectual taste, he showed so much relish for learning, and so much quickness in acquiring it, that his father determined to place him where his piety and learning would serve, not only to his own advantage, but to the glory of God.

He was first put under the Franciscan friars, at Acqs, and had been four years in their school when a gentleman chose him as assistant-preceptor to his children, thus enabling him to go on with his studies without taxing his hard-working parents. At twenty years of age Vincent entered the University of Toulouse, where he studied divinity and was raised to the priesthood.

In 1605, two years before the settlement of Jamestown, Virginia, as Vincent was returning from Marseilles to Toulouse in a boat, he was captured by Mahometans, and by them sold into slavery—for sale like "cattle at a fair," to use Vincent's own words, "mak-

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ing us open our mouths and show our teeth, pinching our sides and making us walk, trot, lift burdens and wrestle to show our strength, beside a thousand other brutalities." He fell from the hands of one master to those of another, and at last became the property of an apostate Christian. St. Vincent never regretted the hardships of his life as a slave, for, by his example he won a soul to God. His master, sorry for his apostacy, not only helped Vincent to escape to Italy, but went with him, leaving behind him the riches he had made by forsaking the faith of Christ.

In Italy, Vincent could have satisfied his devotion—Italy, where the relics of so many martyrs, and the shrines raised in honor of so many of the great saints, declare the virtues possible, by the grace of God in His sacraments, to mortals like ourselves. Still he did not linger in Rome, but hastened to France, where his sense of obedience told him his duties lay, and on his return was charged by Cardinal d'Ossat to deliver a message, too important to be trusted in writing, to the king, Henry IV. He performed this errand with care and fidelity, and then returned, with sincere contentment, to his own obscure manner of living.

At this time, as if no humiliation could be spared in his education as a saint, he was accused by a magistrate, who shared his room, of stealing a large sum of money, and was even charged with this disgraceful sin before a number of distinguished persons. Under this mortifying accusation the serenity of Vincent never failed him, his only reply, being, "God

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knows the truth." He bore this slander for six years, when the true thief was taken up at Bourdeaux for another crime, and, to quiet his own conscience and to clear the innocent Vincent, he sent for the magistrate, and owned his crime. The magistrate, ashamed of his insulting treatment of Vincent, begged, in the most humble and contrite manner, his forgiveness. It was thus that St. Vincent tried to copy his Divine Master, who bore in silence the malignant accusations of the Jews.

If I should name all the charitable institutions founded by St. Vincent I should fill many pages; and if I added to these the many beautiful acts of his life, so well known to you all, I should fill a volume; but some of these are so remarkable, and seem so little known, that I will give them here.

In France, the galley-slaves were men condemned to the most severe labor, in the most loathsome prisons, cut off from hope and from their fellow men. To these prisons St. Vincent gained admittance, not only to relieve some of their dreadful sufferings, but to help them in gaining merit by them, so that all their punishment should be in this world. He was met by these poor creatures with curses and blasphemies; but he did not shrink, he did not despair. Jesus died for them and therefore Vincent loved them. Yes *loved* them. He did not *pretend* to love them, but really and actually loved them with the same love that Jesus felt for sinners. Loving them, he tried to gain their love. With sweet words, and gentle winning ways,

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he went among them. He kissed their chains, he embraced them; he listened to all their complaints; he used prayers, and entreaties, to those who had the care of them, to deal more kindly, more forbearingly with them. These gentle looks, words, actions, at length overcame them. He had pierced, with the arrow of saintly sweetness, the hard habit of sin. They learned to weep like children, to pray, to do penance. Their life of terrible punishment was now one of humble expiation, and the sting and the bitterness were gone. But St. Vincent did still more. Seeing one day a man sadder than usual even among these unhappy galley-slaves, he asked the cause of his dejection. The poor man replied, that by his imprisonment a good wife and several little ones were thrown on the charity of the world, and he groaned, not for his own sufferings, but for theirs. The tender heart of Vincent was touched; the courageous, self-forgetful heart was nerved for the sacrifice. Can you imagine it, my dear children? Yet, it is true, that St. Vincent actually took the place of this unhappy man, with the consent of the jailor, and lived, for months, the life of a galley-slave, until he was discovered by his friends, and, against his will, *forcibly* released! The marks of the chains never left his ankles, and the galling of those dreadful irons gave him pain to the end of his life.

Here is a story that rebukes the pride of the rich in their riches, and especially of those rich people who are ashamed of their early poverty.

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As St. Vincent grew old and infirm, and the lameness that was brought on by the chains in the galley-prisons, increased, a distinguished lady sent him a carriage and horses, that he might visit his charitable houses. He utterly refused to accept this gift, until obliged to do so under obedience to the archbishop of Paris. The humble Vincent, who would neither allow himself, nor others, to forget that he was the son of a peasant, was ashamed to be seen in what he considered a style above his station. He called his carriage and horses "his shame and disgrace," and said to the Fathers of the Oratory, whom he one day visited, "See, my fathers, see how the son of a peasant has the audacity to ride through the streets in a carriage!"

In our own country, where no distinctions of rank are handed down from father to son, but where the son of the humblest may rise to the highest position of honor or wealth, we may not see the full force of Vincent's humility; but let us copy his spirit, and remember that real greatness is never ashamed of an humble birth, nor does it crave marks of outward rank.

The priory of St. Lazarus, a magnificent building, with a grand chapel, and with an estate around it such as would make a paradise, was, in 1630, given to St. Vincent by the one who had been its prior. From this priory were named the Lazarist Fathers, the spiritual sons of St. Vincent, whom he sent as missionaries throughout France. We are told, that when a claim to this noble property had been made by some other

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party, and while the question was still under consideration, St. Vincent was found in the chapel, on his knees; and, that the only pain he felt in the prospect of leaving this new home, was, the necessity of parting with three or four poor idiots, whom he found at St. Lazarus, and to whom he had given the most affectionate attention. In the priory of St. Lazarus was the theological school for the training of those who wished to be priests, for the need of good and useful priests lay close to the heart of St. Vincent; there was also an asylum for his old favorites, the idiots; and, besides this, a refuge for those young men who were found in a state of intoxication, or in dens of vice. Many of these unfortunate inebriates were gentlemen by birth; indeed most of them were so, for the poor have no time to indulge in such dreadful dissipation, no money to spend in costly poison. These young men were taken up, while in a state of insensibility, and carried to the priory of St. Lazarus. On their arrival each one was taken to a solitary room, no one, but the superior, knowing his name or rank; and in this solitary chamber, while every care was taken of him, he was left alone with his own sad thoughts and upbraiding conscience. The sudden change from the sinful orgies of saloons to the quiet of this holy place, from boisterous, profane companions to the peaceful society of the monk who attended them, all produced an awe, a solemnity, not to be described; and however angry they might be at first, they yielded by degrees to the sacred influences around them, and

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sighed, not after the worldly and wicked pleasures from which they had been taken, but for the innocent and heavenly pleasures of the people of God. After a time the beautiful gardens of the priory were thrown open to these unhappy prodigals, and the freshness and loveliness of nature, the pure joys of an innocent life amid the works of God, helped them to return to their own "Father's house;" they would then throw themselves at the feet of St. Vincent, make an humble confession of their sins, desiring, like good sons of the Church, to practice their Christian duties. When these spiritually sick ones were really strong and well in mind, they were allowed to go out into the world, not to fall again and again, but to show a real conversion and a holy strength to resist temptation. When St. Vincent lay dead, and his remains were visited by princes and peasants, these young men, then among the flower of the French nobility, did not forget him, but came to pay their tribute of love and respect to their kind jailor at the priory of St. Lazarus.

When you have read this short sketch of the life of St. Vincent de Paul, I hope you will take the first opportunity to read the full life, as it has been written several times, and can be found in almost any Catholic library. You will then read about those royal charities—royal because kings might be proud to have it in their power to do so much for the relief of suffering—which Vincent, the son of a peasant in Gascony, was so happy as to distribute among his countrymen in all parts of France. When the little kingdom of

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Lorraine had been ruined by the march and countermarch of armies, which fed like locusts on her beautiful fields, famine and pestilence came in to add to the horrors of her terrified people. Parents even fed upon their own children, and Lorraine was like Jerusalem during that siege which makes one's blood run cold as one reads of its unnatural horrors. But the cry of Lorraine came to the ears of St. Vincent; and then flowed, from the supernatural treasures of the heart of our saint, such consolations, such benedictions, as changed Lorraine into a kingdom of peace and joy. It is not until we read such a history as the life of St. Vincent, that we know how readily the heart of man answers to the call of charity, or how rich we are when the heart is inspired to make a generous sacrifice.

You will also read, in the full life of St. Vincent, of the Hospital of Hotel-Dieu; and of the Foundling Hospital for those little ones disowned by unhappy parents. You will also read of the Sisters of Charity, whom you all know and love, and who are sometimes called the "Daughters of St. Vincent." Had St. Vincent done but the one work of giving to the world this noble Order of "The Sisters of Charity," how much should we not all owe to him? "Their name," we may say, "is gone out to all the earth, and their sound to the ends of the world." Their hospitals for the sick, the insane, for armies and navies; their asylums for orphans, for foundlings; their schools and sodalities; and, lastly, that brave army of corneted sisters on the other side of the globe, who take the

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little infants, left on the rivers of China to a cruel death, and give them the saving sacrament of baptism, waiting for these tiny victims of heathenism to drift down to them, more patiently than merchants watch for their ships from India, loaded with spices and sweet gums —all these wonders of our own day bear the seal of St. Vincent de Paul, while the blessed cheerfulness of his life of charity followed him to the last, and his humility grew with his holiness.

How often do we see worldly people, knowing, very well, that death is near them, yet making no preparations for it! If they were starting in a few months on a long voyage, how careful they would be to put all their affairs in order; so careful that it would seem as if they expected to die before their return. But, when the voyage of death is before them, they make no preparation for it. Age may have set in, their ripe years are passing into decay, yet the things of this world take up all their thoughts. One would fancy they had forgotten that they, too, must die. Behold St. Vincent, after a whole life spent as a preparation for death, renewing every day this preparation for the coming of his Lord and Master, to whom he must render an account of all the graces he had received. Every morning he repeated the prayers of the Church for those in their last agony, and often said to those around him, "One of these days the miserable body of this old sinner will be laid in the ground; it will turn to dust, and you will tread it underfoot." When the hand of death was indeed upon him, and he had

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received Extreme Unction, he fell at times into a doze; but the sweet name of Jesus, in which he had performed such miracles of charity, would instantly rouse him. He died in his chair, bowing his head while in the act of pronouncing a promise of benediction on his dear children in God. On his tomb is inscribed, "Here lies that venerable man, Vincent de Paul, priest, founder and first superior of the Congregation of the Mission, and also of the Sisters of Charity. He died on the 27th of September, 1660, in the 85th year of his age."

The feast of St. Vincent de Paul is celebrated on the 19th of July. In 1863 a magnificent hospital was opened on the little farm tilled by Vincent's father, and where Vincent himself had tended the flocks and herds. The small cabin in which they lived is still standing under the shadow of the great hospital, that is his best monument, and a tree, under which the boy Vincent often meditated, is still green and flourishing. Many of our dear Sisters of Charity carry crucifixes made from the branches of this tree. They will also show pictures to you of the humble birth-place and of the hospital of St. Vincent. The pride of the Sisters of Charity, we may say, is the humility of their founder.

While I have been writing these pages, a venerable "Daughter of Vincent de Paul," has given up her account as stewardess of many a flourishing house of charity. Seldom does it fall to the lot of any one to do all the good that our noble-minded, noble-hearted Sister O—— was privileged to do. As was said of her

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by one who knew her well, "even when age allowed her, by the rules of her Order, to retire to St. Joseph's, the beloved home of the Sisters of Charity in America, she chose labor rather than rest;" and came to within a stone's throw of the room in which I am writing, to attend to the sick poor of our large parish. The undertaking grew under her hands, and the result was, under the blessing of God, the patronage of St. Vincent, of our pastor, and the co-operation of the "Ladies of Charity," that she founded the first "House of Providence" in the United States, naming it, as she promised to do if successful, ST. VINCENT'S HOUSE OF PROVIDENCE. No one but the sick poor, and their families, know the good that has been done by the visits of these daughters of St. Vincent in the homes of the humble. Not only have the many wants of the sick and aged poor been relieved, but they have found their souls aided as well, and the dying prepared for a happy passage out of this world—proving how the wise rule of St. Vincent de Paul suits itself to the needs of all times, and of all countries.

Among the pictures in my black leather portfolio, are two of St. Vincent de Paul. One represents him with an orphan in his arms, while he leads by the hand another orphan, a dear little girl, through the snowy streets. In the other picture a wretched woman, sinful but penitent, is embracing the feet of her crucified Saviour; beside her lies a little foundling; close to this group stands our Saint, and near him one of those noble women of France who aided Vincent in his

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gigantic charities. He is pointing out to her this sinful woman, and the innocent foundling, as if saying, "They must be your charge. Your wealth, your position, must provide for them a shelter and protect them from temptation."

O, all ye rich and powerful ones, let the voice of St. Vincent de Paul reach your hearts as it did the hearts of the women of the French nobility! Remember that the noblest privilege of wealth is to relieve the poor, of the virtuous to raise the fallen, of the powerful to protect the innocent from danger, and give a home to the homeless, the orphan and the foundling. By doing such works of charity in the spirit of St. Vincent, we may share in the merits, though our state of life may not allow us to wear the grey habit and the white cornet of the beloved and venerated Sisters of Charity.

Holy Vincent de Paul, pray for us!



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SAINT LAURENCE.

SEVERAL years ago there was an exhibition of very rare pictures in Chicago, and among them was one claiming special admiration and respect, for it was said to be "A genuine Titian;" that is, the picture was painted by Titian, that great master of painting, one of the greatest, indeed, that ever lived.

Some persons could not believe it possible that a picture painted by Titian should have found its way to Chicago; but, as I had seen it many years before in a famous collection in Philadelphia, where its genuineness was admitted, and, later still, in the parlor of the gentleman who had come into peaceable possession of it by way of inheritance, I never had any doubt or question as to its being all that it claimed to be, and enjoyed, with my whole heart, the opportunity of seeing, and studying again, in a good light, this masterpiece of art, this triumph of religion.

How heavenly was the face, how ecstatic the joy, in every part of that youthful figure! How lovely the

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carnations of that virgin flesh, how exquisite the sensibility of the quivering fingers! Will it not delight every one of my young readers to be told that this master-piece of the great Titian was no other than the martyrdom of St. Laurence? St. Laurence, that youthful deacon, who was so devoted to the venerable Pope, St. Xystus, that when this aged pontiff was led forth to martyrdom, St. Laurence cried out to him, in tears, "Father, whither are you going without your son? Whither are you going, O holy priest, without your deacon?" The holy pontiff, bent and trembling with age, consoled his dear son in Christ, by saying, "Thou art younger, my son, than I, and God keeps thee back for a still harder combat; but take heart; in three days thou shalt follow me."

Sweet promise! Hard, indeed, to be understood by the children of the world, who hear nothing with so much pain, as that they are soon to leave this world and go to God; to God, whom they know not, whom they love not, whom they never sigh to see or to be near; but a most sweet and consoling promise, understood by the young St. Laurence, and more enchanting, and delightful, than any promise of worldly happiness, or of the longest life of prosperity.

St. Laurence lived in an age of dreadful persecution; but it is in such times that we learn to value, as it deserves, our holy religion. It is not in the midst of ease, and softness, that Catholics really prize the glorious old faith for which so many popes and bishops and priests and deacons and virgins and fathers and

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mothers and even tender children have cheerfully laid down their lives. O, no! it is not in prosperous times, when fathers of families are thinking how they can make money the fastest, and the soonest lay by a fortune, and build spacious houses, and fill them with magnificent furniture and load their tables with silver and gold and delicate glass and costly porcelain; and when mothers are thinking how splendidly they can dress themselves and their children, what showy accomplishments will make them most attractive, or what grand parties and expensive entertainments they can give to secure the admiration of their worldly friends, and the flattery, even, of their enemies. No, my dear children, it is not in such times, as I have just described, that Catholics know, or even take the trouble to consider, how blessed they are in their holy faith. They are too much taken up by the vanity of riches, and the dreams of this world, to think of their souls, or how soon they will need their religion to help them die a safe death, saying nothing of a happy one.

But God often allows the most worldly Catholics to be roused from this miserable, degrading worship of Mammon. He allows them to be stripped of all these dear possessions, all this false grandeur, all this flattery of a deceitful world, and makes them, again, the disciples of the despised Nazarene. Again, it is "Jesus," and "Jesus crucified," "crucified between two thieves," jeered at by the worldly Pharisee, the learned scribe, the unbelieving Saducee, and mocked and insulted by the ignorant rabble, whom they lovingly call "Master"

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Yes my dear children, God sometimes allows this; and, indeed, in some part or another of the world, this persecution of Catholics is going on continually, even to the shedding of blood and the most cruel torments. Thus, in truth, God keeps fresh the seed of faith in the hearts of His children, and reminds them that this faith is the only food by which they can live so as to gain eternal bliss, the only riches they can lay up for eternity, the only honor that will outlast crumbling tombstones and falling monuments, the only joy a wise man will ever covet.

During that fearful persecution, under the Emperor Valerian, that began in the year 257, and in the midst of which St. Laurence lived, Catholics, instead of hoarding up money until they grudged it even for the charities of the Church, brought all their goods, all their gold, silver and precious jewels, all the money for which they sold their vast estates, and put them into the hands of the deacons; through them to be distributed among the poor, or to assist the Church in her necessities. There were no misers, then, among Christians; no worldly people who were trying to serve God and mammon at the same time. It was this knowledge which made the pagans seize St. Laurence, the deacon, hoping to discover by him the treasures of the Church. But St. Laurence had distributed these treasures as freely as they had been given; and in answer to the questions of his persecutors about the place where they were hidden, he pointed to the poor, the sick, the lame, the blind, say-

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ing: "Here are our treasures." Yes, dear children, the sick, the poor, the lame, the blind, are, indeed, the *treasures* of the Church; as such she esteems them, claims them, glories in them. Our Lord has said, "The poor ye have always with you," and this, like all His promises to His Church never fails.

We see, then, how easy it was for the Catholics of those days to die, as to their money. They had no long wills to make; they had only to choose between pagan robbery and the charities of the Church, and one need not be a very courageous lover of holy poverty to choose under such circumstances. Having given up their property, with all its cares and anxieties; having given up all ambition in a pagan society, where *a Christian* was another name for an outcast; having, in many cases, given up all the sweet ties of family and home, since the Christian was liable to be exposed to the torture, even by the nearest of pagan friends; and, at all times, living detached lives, persecution having made them realize that God is more to us than any and all friends, however dear—having made all these sacrifices, how easy it was to die! How easy, even, to be a martyr, and die a death of torment for God's sake, since, the short suffering over, Heaven was near —Heaven without an hour of purgatory—Heaven with its Beatific Vision, its torrent of delights, its eternity of good! What a glorious thing, you will say, to be a Catholic in those days! Rather, let us say, what a holy, what a noble, what an unspeakably precious privilege, to be a Catholic, a faithful Catholic,

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in any age of the Church! There is no such privilege, no such honor, no such happiness, as this.

When the answer of St. Laurence was reported to the prefect, and he found that, instead of heaps of gold and silver, he was shown only a crowd of disgusting lepers, lame, and blind, and ragged beings, to whom these treasures had been given out—he was so enraged that he resolved to be revenged upon St. Laurence, the deacon, for his disappointment, and ordered him to be stretched on an immense gridiron, with fire enough under it to burn, without immediately killing, the holy and intrepid young Christian.

It was upon this bed of fearful tortures, while his skin was slowly cracking over the hot coals, and his flesh roasting inch by inch, that St. Laurence learned how Jesus Christ rewards the love of those who are ready to die for Him. So far from sinking under his tortures, he seems to have been more than insensible to them, for they became sources of the most ravishing joy and exultation. The flames became a bed of refreshment to his soul, and he could say, with a gay smile, to his unfeeling attendants, "Let my body be turned now; one side is broiled enough." He was turned, by the order of the prefect, giving, as he supposed, inconceivable torment; but St. Laurence said, "It is dressed enough. You may eat." The prefect insulted him, hoping to disturb this miraculous peace, this celestial joy; but he continued in fervent prayer for the conversion of Rome, which was still pagan Rome, although it contained the tombs of SS. Peter

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and Paul. His prayer was, in a manner, answered upon the spot, for several senators, who were present at his death, were so moved by his holy fortitude, his devout exultation, that they became Christians beside the crisped body of St. Laurence on his gridiron. After the pure soul of the young deacon had left the body, these same noble senators took the martyr's relics on their shoulders and gave them honorable burial. All this happened on the 10th of August, 258.

It was St. Laurence on the infamous gridiron of his persecutors, the cruel executioners feeding the flames so as to torment, not immediately kill, their victim, that was represented by the master-piece of Titian in the exhibition of pictures in Chicago. Many persons turned away with a shudder, declaring they could not endure to look at such a scene of torment; while others would linger for hours over the joy, the triumph, on the face of the martyr, whose eyes turned heavenward, as if catching a glimpse of his waiting crown and palm. For us, it is not enough to shudder at the torment, or to admire the triumph. Another step remains for us; humbly, at a far off distance, to imitate St. Laurence on his fiery bed.

There is a notion among children that mortifications are only for grown-up people, who can fast. Grown-up people, too, have a notion that mortifications, beyond the fasts of the Church, were for the days of the martyrs and old-fashioned saints. Leaving the grown-up people to their good pastors, I will tell you, my dear children, how to practice a mortification that is

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not beyond your age nor your strength—a *real mortification;* for children often long to know of some real mortification which they can practice.

We are very likely to have hot weather the 10th of August, which is the feast of St. Laurence, the day on which he lay on his fiery bed, and smiled from it, calling it his "bed of roses." Now, let every child try, on that day, not to complain, quite as much as usual, of the heat; not to beg and tease your mother, all day, for ice-water, nor to be dressed in your very thinnest frock or pants. Do not say very much about the heat, and especially try not to consider youself privileged to be cross that day, simply, because, "*it is hot.*" To do as I have said, in the spirit of a loving imitation of St. Laurence, is to perform an act of mortification; and Father Faber tells us, exactly what every saint would tell us, that to practice mortification, is a sure way to be very happy, very cheerful, and even gay. It is not having everything that we want, that makes us happy; but the doing without, for the love of God, what we might have if we wished. I repeat, doing without for the *love of God*—remember, it is not doing without to save money, nor to gain one pleasure by giving up another, that will make us happy; but giving it up for the love of God.

I have reminded you, many times, that it is the love of God that makes saints; let me add, that it was this love of God that made the martyrs joyful in their sufferings, made St. Laurence radiant as an angel on his gridiron.

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You will often see a poor father and mother working hard, year after year, and so patiently, too, early and late, summer and winter, even when they are ill and their bones aching and their heads throbbing; and they will tell you that it is because they *love* their children, because they wish to give them a comfortable, happy home, and a good education, that they endure this life of labor and privation.

A few doors from me, a dear old lady is lying very ill. She needs to be turned in her bed, to be tended night and day. She is very old, and helpless, and heavy with age. Do you think her children, her good, faithful children, ever complain, ever grudge this good mother their lifting and tending of her? O, no! no! They say it is their happiness, for they *love* their mother. They remember how she carried them as bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh, the very core of her heart, dearer than the apple of her eye; and they love her so well, that they think they can never do enough for her. Yes, my dear children, it is love that makes all hard things easy, all labors pleasant, all privations joyful; and the love of God so filled the hearts of the martyrs, that they grudged Him no labors, no hardships, no torments, that He might ask from them. They remembered how God had loved them, had created and preserved them, and had, finally, redeemed them by a death of such torture as no martyr ever suffered. Therefore they said, "We can never do enough for God, nor, in any way, show Him how much we love Him. O, that we could suffer something for Him,

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who has suffered all for us!" It is this same love of God that, in all ages, makes mortification easy and sweet; and this sort of mortification will obtain for us an ever increasing love of God, and all the merit of a true martyrdom.

In the church of the Jesuits in Venice, Italy, a church that excites the admiration of all travelers by the beauty of its marbles, there is another picture, also by Titian, of the martyrdom of St. Laurence. I have a large photograph of the High Altar of this church, and it is pleasant, as I look at it, to remember that in one of the side chapels is a picture of this favorite saint.

Fra Angelico painted a series of five pictures, representing St. Laurence. In one of these we see him giving alms to the poor, and sick, and lame, the widowed and orphaned. He is dressed as a deacon, and his dalmatic is covered with little flames, some may think of the fire that consumed his flesh, but I should say, of that fire of the love of God that was stronger to console, than the mortal fire of wood was to torture.

The picture which I have chosen for this volume, however, is from the pious School of Sienna; and no picture could give a lovelier idea of the youthful deacon, clothed in his embroidered dalmatic, the book of the Gospels in one hand, in the other the palm he so nobly won. Everything in this youthful figure breathes of peace, of candor, of innocence; and when we see the gridiron at his side, we understand that his triumph was not that of the strong man, who bites down the cry of pain, but the celestial triumph of love, and

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faith, over the powers of this world. This is the true triumph of a Christian—the only triumph that deserves the name—and this triumph remember, was gained by the youth, St. Laurence.

Be in the habit of asking God, especially in the person of the Holy Ghost, to "kindle in your hearts the fire of Divine love." The hymn to the Holy Ghost should be committed to memory by every child, and those beautiful invocations to the Holy Ghost, found in the Office of Whit Sunday, or Pentecost, in your "Roman Missal for the Laity," will furnish you with prayers that will grow dearer to you every year of your life. These prayers to the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Love, will take, and more than take, the place of many exhortations to those whom you wish to have attend to their duty, or to avoid temptation. You may not always be able to warn those you love of the dangers around them, or you may not be able to rouse them from their indifference to heavenly things; but you can always pray to the Holy Spirit to kindle in their hearts the "fire of Divine love," and this prayer answered, all your wishes are answered.

Constantly beg of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, and of all the saints, and, on the 10th of August especially of St. Laurence, to obtain for you this love of God, and I promise you that you will never be a lukewarm Catholic, nor any thing but a very faithful, very happy, and even a very joyful Catholic.

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SAINT DOMINIC.

OF all our waking hours not one is so likely to be an idle one as that of the evening twilight. The labors and the active, noisy sports of the day are over. Nellie has been told to lay down her delightful new story-book, "for," says Mamma, "it will ruin your eyes to read by this twilight;" and, however unwillingly she may obey, another moment makes every letter, even to her keen young sight, quite indistinct. The only pet in lively humor at this hour is the kitten, and one tires, sometimes, even of kitty, graceful and frolicksome as she is. Nellie turns dreamily from her half-read story, and finishes it in imagination. If it is summer, the tinted clouds of the long sunset help her to build gorgeous castles in the air; and if it is winter, dozens of castles appear suddenly in the bright coals and dancing flames of the burning hickory or anthracite.

It makes no difference, then, whether it is winter or summer, the twilight hour is very likely to be an idle one. The ladies who knit, and certainly Grand-

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mamma knits, take out their long bright needles at this hour, and many a pretty, red baby-sock has been shaped "between sunset and dark." But although I like my knitting-needles I seldom use them at twilight —that hour so calm, so sacred to thought, so favorable to meditation. Years of custom have made it a second habit to me to say my rosary just at this time, and my idle fingers, released from pencil and pen, instinctively go to the depths of my pocket for my well-worn beads. The habit of monks and nuns, duly observed from age to age, has, perhaps, made it a habit with people living in the world to say the rosary at evening; or, a universal sentiment may have made this devotion, what it really is, a *vesper* devotion; but however this may be, almost every person has the same habit of saying the rosary at evening, before night. It takes the place of castle-building and twilight dreaming, with the young, and sends their active imaginations, not to fairy land, but far, far beyond it—sends them far beyond the lightest arrow of fancy ever sped from the bow of poet, or musician, far beyond the deepening blue of the sky, to the mysteries and glories above it—the mystery of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the mystery of His nativity, of His hidden, suffering, and glorified life on earth, and the unutterable glory of His life in Heaven after his ascension—all these mysteries, and glories, invite the imagination of the child that quietly takes up its beads at twilight: and as the shadows deepen, and the colors fade from the changing clouds, and the

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birds sing their last carol, and the stars come out, one by one, in the solemn sky, the heart of the child has dilated and taken in both Heaven and earth, both God and man! You can well afford, my dear little child, to lay down your very prettiest story-book for an enjoyment that has been prepared to meet this very want of something to do, something to think of, during the one idle hour of the whole day.

Every morning, at church, I see a dear old lady who says her beads all through the mass, excepting at the most solemn parts of it. Catholics often do this. It is not my own way of assisting at mass, for, better than any "Prayers to be said during mass," I like the "Ordinary of the Mass," with the special prayers in the Office of the day, as it is said by the priest who celebrates. Nothing so fills my soul, so excites my devotion, as the grand composure, the solemn joyfulness, and the adoring ecstacy of the "Mass Prayers," as I find them translated in my "Roman Missal for the Laity." I try never to lose sight of what the priest is doing and saying; for, as a wise man once said to me, "The mass is intended for the eye as well as for the ear," and by this way of using both my eyes and my ears in following the action of the priest, my mass is, generally, a recollected one.

But, although this is my favorite way of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the mass, there are persons, who, as I have said, always say their beads during mass; and we are not to conclude, from this, that they cannot read their prayers. More than one gallant offi-

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cer during the late war, was in the habit of saying his rosary on horseback, as he waited for his troops to defile before him for the night. Haydn never found himself hesitating over his musical sentences, or failing to express some devout conception in sacred composition, without having recourse to his rosary; and only the other day I read how Gluck, another musical composer, was in the habit of withdrawing from the gay circles of the imperial palace, to which he was often invited, to say his rosary. The rosary has, very aptly, been called "The book of the ignorant," because the mysteries meditated upon, while saying it, are the great mysteries of the Christian religion; and, because, by meditating upon these mysteries, the heart is kindled to devotion in the same way as the quiet reading of pious books may assist us to meditate, with unction, upon these mysteries. Still the universal use of the rosary, proves that it is not only the book of the ignorant, but the book daily handled, and affectionately conned, by the most learned, and the most theologically pious, of all the faithful children of the Catholic Church. No one says his beads more devoutly than the Holy Father, Pius IX.; and St. Francis de Sales, that accomplished author and learned bishop, never failed, during the last half of his life, to recite, daily, the fifteen decades of the rosary.

I could fill a book with examples of extraordinary faith in the devotion of the rosary, gathered from the lives of popes, cardinals, bishops and doctors of divinity, who have found in their rosary a book of wisdom

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as well as of piety; but I have said enough to prove to you that you will learn Christian doctrine, as well as true devotion, by a daily recital of your rosary. No child who can read this book, or who can understand it when hearing it read, should fail to recite every day, one decade of his rosary, *i. e.*, one "Our Father," ten "Hail Maries" and one "Glory."

But what, you may say, has all this to do with St. Dominic, whose life we are reading? So much to do with him that one can never say the rosary without being a friend and disciple of St. Dominic, for to St. Dominic we owe the devotion of the rosary. We cannot say that St. Dominic invented the beads, as people speak of things out of the Catholic Church. I cannot remember that anything has been invented by the Church, or by her saints, *i. e.*, as a Church or as saints. Catholics have invented printing, a very great number of wonderful instruments, such as the clock, the mariner's compass, guns and gunpowder, besides discovering the country we live in and the whole of this western continent; but I have yet to learn that the Church or her saints have ever invented, or even discovered, a dogma or a devotion. The reason of this, is, that dogmas and devotions are directly revealed by God, or grow, indirectly, out of what He has already revealed. Thus, the rosary was not invented by St. Dominic, but, under the impulse of a vision, as we are told, he arranged the prayers, already in use among Catholics, in such a way as to unite meditation on the revealed mysteries to vocal prayers (prayers

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made by the voice or lips), and from this arrangement we have our rosary. It is even said that the use of the beads was not the invention of our saint. Ages before St. Dominic lived, the hermits, or Fathers of the desert, used to count their prayers by using little stones, very much as we use our beads. You see, therefore, that there was nothing new about the rosary, that it was no invention, but only a skillful using of the old, old treasures of the Church of God. You are now prepared, I hope, to feel a deep interest in this sketch of the life of St. Dominic.

It was in the year 1170, while Alexander III. was seated in the chair of St. Peter as Pope of Rome, that Dominic Guzman was born at his father's castle of Calaroga in Old Castile, Spain. St. Dominic was descended from a long and chivalrous line of ancestors, and it is said that his father's family was a family of saints. Both his mother, Joanna of Aza, and Manez, her second son, received the solemn beatification of the Church; and Antonio, the eldest son, was no unworthy member of this devout family; for, becoming a secular priest and in a position to expect the highest ecclesiastical honors, he turned aside from all of them, and chose a state of holy poverty, which he secured by distributing his whole property to the poor, and retiring to a hospital, where he spent his life in attending upon the sick. The mother of these two good sons was to be still further rewarded, for her own devoted piety, by the sanctity of her third son, our beloved Dominic. To prepare her to receive this rare treasure,

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and to guard it suitably, his greatness was revealed to her in a special manner before his birth, for she saw, in a mysterious vision, a dog bearing in his mouth a lighted torch. This vision is hinted at in the pictures in which we see St. Dominic accompanied by a dog with a lighted torch. The noble lady who held him at the font, saw, as the water was poured over his head, a brilliant star on the infant's forehead. It is this star which you see in the picture of St. Dominic that I have chosen to illustrate this sketch of his life, and which is taken from the "Coronation of the Blessed Virgin," as painted by Fra Angelico of Fiesole, and still one of the treasures of the Gallery of the Louvre in Paris. This star on his forehead distinguishes him among the multitudes of saints surrounding the Throne of Heaven in this delightful picture.

When seven years old, Dominic was put under the care of his uncle, the Arch-priest of Gumiel di Izan, a town not far from Calaroga. Here he grew up in the service of the altar, learning to recite the Divine Office, singing hymns, serving at mass and at other public ceremonies, and fulfilling those numberless little duties, which make the lives of so many Catholic boys fragrant with the incense of the sanctuary. Alas! how many of these favored little boys can say that they have improved all these special privileges and graces, and have been better men for having stood so near to our Lord? We will hope, however, that every altar-boy corresponds to some of these graces, and is really better than he would have been if he had never worn

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the dress, and performed the angelic service, of an acolyte. At the age of fourteen, the young Dominic left his holy uncle, and was sent to the university of Palencia, then one of the most celebrated in Spain. During the ten years he lived in Palencia, he was distinguished for his application as a student, and for his angelic innocence of life. He devoted four years to the most profound study of philosophy and sacred letters, often spending the nights, as well as the days, over his books. "It was a thing most marvellous and lovely to behold," says the one who wrote his life, Theodoric of Apoldia; "this man, a boy in years but a sage in wisdom; superior to the pleasures of his age, he thirsted only after justice; and, not to lose time, he preferred the bosom of his mother, the Church, to the aimless life of the foolish world around him. The sacred repose of her tabernacle was his resting place; his time was divided equally between study and prayer, and God rewarded the fervent love with which he kept His commandments, by bestowing on him such a spirit of wisdom and understanding as made it easy for him to solve the most difficult questions." We can understand, by this devotion of St. Dominic to his studies, how precious in his eyes must have been the books from which he drew such coveted treasures. I hope you have already learned, from these lives of the saints, how dear to these ancient scholars, were their books; not only on account of the difficulty of obtaining them, but for the value placed upon learning itself. Yet we find this lover of learning, this noble-born Dominic

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Guzman, during a terrible famine which desolated Spain, so touched by the sufferings of his countrymen that he not only gave all the money he had to give in alms, selling even his clothes in order to buy food for the poor, but he set a still nobler example to his fellow-students by selling his beloved and precious books, that the price of them might be distributed among the starving people. When one of his companions expressed his surprise that Dominic should thus deprive himself of the means of pursuing his studies, he replied, "Would you have me studying off those dead parchments while there are men dying of hunger?" On another occasion, finding a poor woman in great distress because her only son had been taken captive by the Moors, Dominic, having no money to offer for his ransom, begged her to take him, sell him and use the money thus obtained to ransom her son. Such was the tender pity of the self-denying Dominic for the sufferings and sorrows of others.

Dominic was twenty-five years old when he became a priest, ripe for its duties, both in learning and sanctity. He received the habit of the Canons Regular of the Order of St. Augustine, and afterwards spent nine years at Osma, where he was sub-prior of the convent to which he belonged. He won the confidence of every one around him, and laid, deeper and deeper, the foundations of a holiness that was to edify the world.

In 1203 the bishop of Osma was appointed, by Alfonzo VIII, king of Castile, to arrange a marriage between his eldest son and a princess of Denmark;

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and the bishop selected Dominic to accompany him. On their way to Denmark they passed through Languedoc, a province in the south of France, which was then overrun with the false doctrines of the Albigenses. The faith of the person with whom they lodged had been unsettled by these doctrines, and Dominic, pierced to the heart by the unhappy delusions of this man, spent the whole night in unravelling its falsehoods to him, and, in that one night, made him a perfect and persevering believer in the blessed truths of the Church.

The death of the princess on the very eve of her marriage, changed all the plans of the ecclesiastics in the royal train, and Dominic was one of those who asked to be allowed to remain where so many laborers were needed in the vineyard of the Church. From this time we see Dominic given up to the conversion of souls. It is said that the rosary was his peculiar weapon in the conversion of Languedoc, and it is certain that prayer, and the preaching of the truth, made up his armor. To assist him in his holy design God allowed him to work wonderful miracles, and many credible witnesses, who had no reason to be partial to Dominic, gave in their testimony to the truth of these miracles. On one occasion, after a long conversation with the Albigenses, Dominic wrote out a short explanation of the Catholic faith, with proofs of each article of belief from the New Testament. This paper he gave to them to look over carefully. After a great deal of disputing among themselves, the leaders of the Albigenses agreed to throw it into the fire, saying,

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"If it burns we shall know the doctrine it defends is false." But the paper, instead of burning, was thrown into the fire three times, and was each time taken from it without having been scorched. Yet only one person was converted by this miracle. Sometime after the same miracle was wrought for the same end, to save souls, and many yielded to this proof, so kindly repeated by God to fix their wavering faith in his servant, and faithful priest, Dominic. This miracle has been told by every one who has written the life of St. Dominic, because the testimony to its truth has always been believed.

During all the years spent with such heroic charity among the Albigenses, Dominic never complained of any injuries or affronts which he received, and only studied how to do good to those who persecuted him. One day an Albigensis, unknown to our saint, offered to be his guide; but instead of leading him by the nearest and easiest path, led him through rough ways, over stones and briars, so that Dominic's feet were terribly cut and bruised, for he always walked barefoot. The meekness with which Dominic received this treatment and the joyfulness with which he tried to console his unkind guide, when he saw his regret, calling "My blood is the mark of my success," so shook the wicked intention of the unhappy man, that he confessed his malice and actually became a Catholic.

These deluded people amused themselves by treating this humble, barefooted friar, who was to be seen about their streets, as a fool. They would follow him,

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throwing dirt at him and spitting in his face, tying straws to his hat and cloak, and running at him with shouts and mocking laughter. Sometimes to these insults were added threats of death, but the meek son of the chivalrous old lord of Castile was never disturbed; he seldom noticed them, or, if he answered, it was only to say, "I am not worthy of martyrdom." Once he was warned that a party of Albigenses were lying in wait at a certain place to kill him. He treated this information with his usual indifference, and passed the place singing hymns with a most joyful countenance. These men, who very likely wished to frighten him rather than to kill him, insultingly asked him: "What would *you* have done if you had fallen into *our* hands?" Then the great and courageous spirit of a Christian martyr spoke out in the barefoooted friar, a spirit superior in courage and more lofty in its sentiment than even the chivalry of his noblest ancestor—"I would have prayed you," he said, "not to have taken my life at a single blow, but little by little, cutting off each member of my body one by one; when you had done that you should have plucked out my eyes, and then have left me, so as to prolong my torments and gain me a richer crown." It is said that this reply so confounded his enemies that for sometime after they left him quite unmolested, being convinced that to persecute such a man was to give him the only consolation he desired.

Two or three of those many wonderful facts related of him have too delicate a charm about them not to

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be told to my young readers. You will remember the love with which our Dominic regarded his books while a student, and the noble sacrifice he made of them for what was dearer still in his eyes, his fellow-men. During his journeys on foot over the rough ways of Languedoc we still find him accompanied by his beloved tomes. One time, as he was fording the river Ariege on foot, he dropped some of his precious volumes. Three days after, his books were taken from the water by a fisherman, dry, and quite uninjured. Another time he was crossing this same river in a little boat, and being landed on the opposite shore he found he had no money to pay the boatman. The boatman angrily insisted on his fare; "I am," said Dominic, "a follower of Jesus Christ; I carry neither gold nor silver; God will pay you the price of my passage." But the boatman, still more angry, took hold of his cloak, saying, "Leave your cloak with me or pay me my money." Dominic raised his eyes to heaven and stood, for a moment, in prayer; then, looking on the ground, he showed the man a piece of silver lying there which Providence had sent, and said kindly to him, "My brother, there is what you ask; take it and suffer me to go my way."

But the time had come for Dominic to enter in earnest upon the work that was to leave his own mark on the Christian ages. Already he had founded the first house of Dominican nuns, to meet the wants of a distracted, heart-broken neighborhood among the Albigenses. This was at Prouille, a small village

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near Montréal, at the foot of the Pyrenees mountains. Their habit was white with a tawny mantle. This house, founded Dec. 27th, 1206, was afterwards associated to the Order of St. Dominic. These ladies were engaged in teaching children, spending a certain number of hours every day in such labor with the hands, as spinning. It became the mother-house of twelve other convents, and among the prioresses, or superiors, are numbered several of the royal house of Bourbon. It was at Toulouse that Dominic made his own humble beginnings of the Order of Preaching Friars, an Order which to this day is sending forth noble preachers to the old cities of Christendom.

Nothing helps us to realize how wisely the saints planned, and how thorough and lasting was their work, as to try to count up, and remember, how long such Orders as the Benedictine, the Dominican, and Franciscan Orders, have been in existence; to remember, also, how many strong governments have been shattered while they survive and flourish; survive and flourish, too, not only in the countries and among the people where they were first planted, but transplanted to our own new country, among a people ignorant, often, of their claims to peculiar veneration. And this is not a mere chance, nor is it because of fortunate circumstances. St. Dominic intended to have his Order do exactly what it has done, and began in a way to make sure of the very success, which we, more than six hundred years after, can see it has earned.

Peter Cellani offered his own house, in Toulouse,

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to Dominic and the six companions who had joined him in his great work. In after years Peter used to say, that he had not been received into the Order, but that he had received the Order into his own house.

With these six companions, Dominic began a community life of poverty and prayer, under rules of religious discipline. But this simple community life was not all that he had planned for himself and his followers. Besides this, he had a strong wish at his heart, and this was the salvation of souls. The means he chose for saving the souls that he valued so much, was, such a preaching of the word of God as could only come from a knowledge of theology, deep enough, and wide enough, and lofty enough, to defend the doctrines of Christianity against all the attacks of unbelievers. He explained to his followers that in order to teach the truth they must first learn it. It so happened that a celebrated doctor of theology, named Alexander, lived at this very time in Toulouse. To him Dominic resolved to entrust his little company of followers. The same morning on which Dominic made this resolve Alexander had risen very early, and while in his room, engaged in study, was overcome by an irresistible need of sleep. His book dropped from his hand and he sank into a deep slumber. As he slept he saw before him seven stars, at first small and scarcely visible, but which increased in size and brightness, until they enlightened the whole world. As day broke he started from his dream and hastened to the school where he was to deliver his usual lecture.

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Scarcely had he entered the room when Dominic and his six companions presented themselves before him. They were all dressed alike, in the white habit and surplice, and they announced themselves as "poor brothers who were about to preach the Gospel of Christ in Toulouse," and who desired, first of all, to profit by his instructions. Alexander understood that he saw before his eyes the seven stars of his morning dream, and, years after, when Europe was ringing with the learning of the Order of Preaching Friars, Alexander, who was at the English court, related the whole circumstance with fatherly pride at having been the first master of the Preaching Friars.

I must ask you, my young friends, to look at the picture of St. Dominic that I have copied for you, and to count the stars on the lower edge of the border. I think you will say, with me, that the person who designed this border, had heard of Alexander, and his seven pupils, the Preaching Friars.

This name of *Preaching Friars* was very dear to St. Dominic. It was the name first given to them by himself, and I will tell you how it was confirmed to them as their true name. The great Pope, Innocent III., was in the chair of St. Peter, when Dominic applied to him, as the head of the Church, for a formal recognition of his young Order; and this far-sighted Pope, although he did not live to grant to it all the privileges necessary, showed a marked affection for Dominic and his brethren. Shortly after giving a favorable answer to Dominic, he had occasion to write

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to him on some affairs connected with the Order, and desired one of his secretaries to send the necessary instructions. When the note was finished, the secretary asked, to whom it should be addressed. "To Brother Dominic and his companions," he answered; then, after a moment's pause, he added, "No, do not write that; let it be, 'To Brother Dominic and those who preach with him in Toulouse;'" then stopping the secretary a third time, he said, "Write this: 'To Master Dominic and the Brothers Preachers.'"

In these days of palace-cars, and of every luxurious invention to cheat the traveler of the sense of weariness, I think my young friends will enjoy the variety of picturing to themselves the good friar, Dominic, on his long journeys from France to Rome; for a more cheery pedestrian never lived than St. Dominic. He always traveled on foot, with a small bundle on his shoulder and a stick in his hand. As soon as he was a little out of the towns and villages, he would stop and take off his shoes, performing the journey barefoot, however rough the roads might be. He would never let his companions carry his bundle, nor even help him to carry it, although they often begged for the privilege. When his winding and rocky way led him to some height overlooking the country or city below him, he would often pause, looking earnestly at it, and weeping for the miseries suffered, and for the sins committed, within it. Then he would put on his shoes so as not to appear too singular, and kneeling down, would pray that no sin of his might bring a

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chastisement upon the place. If a river lay before him on the road, he would make the sign of the cross and then enter it without hesitation, being always the first to ford it. If it rained, or any other discomfort occurred, he would encourage his companions, and then begin singing, in a joyful tone, his favorite hymn, the *Ave Maris Stella*, or the *Veni Creator*. In reading his life, one is struck by the frequent mention of his singing psalms, and canticles of joy, while climbing over the rough mountains, and through the dark ravines, that lay in his way. St. Dominic is described as having fair auburn hair and a most beaming smile, with a disposition so gentle and so joyous, that this picture of St. Dominic, singing over the mountain passes of the rugged Swiss Alps, is full of the spirit of the charming traditions that have come down to us about him. He would often stop at the towns and villages, on his way, to preach. One day a young man said to him, "What books have you studied, father, that your sermons are so full of the learning of the Holy Scriptures?" "I have studied the book of charity, my son, more than any other," he replied; "it is the book that teaches us all things."

One more of those delightful events in the life of our saint, so delightful that they read like legends, must adorn these pages, to be laid up in your minds for the coming days of prosperity, it may be, when you will be tempted to forget the Giver of all your blessings, or it may be, for your days of adversity and straightness, when your hearts will cry out, perhaps,

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to your fellow-men in vain, and when you may almost fancy, in the bitterness of your desolation, that God has forgotten you, has forgotten His promises to those who trust in Him.

After the Pope, Honorius III., had given to the Order of Preaching Friars all the privileges necessary to their success, he allowed St. Dominic to choose a convent for his community. St. Dominic chose one that was, even at that day, full of interest for its religious associations. Among the old churches on the Appian Way, leading from Rome, is one in honor of St. Sixtus, pope and martyr. If an English, Irish, or American traveler should visit this church now, on one of the days when it is open for the devotion of the faithful, he would still find the door opened by a white-robed religious of the Order of St. Dominic; and, what will interest my young readers, is the fact that these good Dominicans speak English. The church of St. Sixtus, the first one occupied by St. Dominic and his followers in the Eternal City, is the property of the Irish Dominicans of St. Clement. This church, with all the buildings attached to it, was granted by Honorius III. to our saint. "When the friars living at St. Sixtus were about one hundred in number, on a certain day the blessed Dominic commanded Brother John of Calabria and Brother Albert of Rome, to go into the city and beg alms. They did so, without success, from morning even until the third hour of the day. Therefore they returned to the convent, and they were already hard by

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the church of St. Anastasia, when they were met by a certain woman who had a great devotion to the Order; and, seeing that they had nothing with them, she gave them a loaf of bread; "For I would not," she said, "that you should go back quite empty handed." As they went on a little further, they met a man who asked them, very importunately, for charity. They excused themselves, saying they had nothing for themselves; but the man only begged them the more earnestly. Then they said one to another, "What can we do with only one loaf? Let us give it to him for the love of God." So they gave him the loaf, and immediately they lost sight of him. Now, when they were come to the convent, the blessed father to whom the Holy Spirit had, meanwhile, revealed all that had passed, came out to meet them, saying to them with a joyful air, "Children, you have nothing?" They replied, "No father," and they told him all that had happened, and how they had given the loaf to the poor man. Then, said he, "It was an angel of the Lord: the Lord will know how to provide for His own; let us go and pray." Thereupon he entered the church, and, having come out again after a little space, he bade the brethren call the community to the refectory. They replied to him, "But, holy father, how is it you would have us call them, seeing there is nothing to give them to eat?" And they, purposely, delayed obeying the order which they had received. Therefore the blessed father caused Brother Roger, the cellarer, to be summoned, and commanded him to assemble the

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brethren to dinner, for the Lord would provide for their wants. Thus they prepared the tables, and placed the cups, and at a given signal all the community entered the refectory. The blessed father gave the benediction, and every one being seated, Brother Henry, the Roman, began to read. Meanwhile the blessed Dominic was praying, his hands being joined together on the table, and, lo! suddenly, even as he had promised them by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, two beautiful young men, ministers of the Divine Providence, appeared in the midst of the refectory, carrying loaves in two white cloths which hung from their shoulders, before and behind. They began to distribute the bread, beginning at the lower rows, one at the right hand, the other at the left, placing before each brother, one whole loaf of admirable beauty. Then when they were come to the blessed Dominic, and had in like manner placed an entire loaf before him, they bowed their heads and disappeared, without anyone knowing, even to this day, whence they came or whither they went. And the blessed Dominic said to his brethren, "My brethren, eat the bread which the Lord has sent you." Then he told the servers to pour out some wine. But they replied, "Holy father, there is none." Then the blessed Dominic, full of the spirit of prophecy, said to them, "Go to the vessel, and pour out to the brethren the wine which the Lord has sent them." They went there, and found, indeed, that the vessel was filled up to the brim with an excellent wine, which

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they hastened to bring. And Dominic said, "Drink, my brethren, of the wine which the Lord has sent you." They ate, therefore, and drank, as much as they desired, both that day, and the next, and the day after that. But after the meal of the third day, he caused them to give what remained to the poor, and would not allow that any more of it should be kept in the house. During these three days no one went to seek alms, because God had sent them bread and wine in abundance. Then the blessed father made a beautiful discourse to his brethren, never to distrust the Divine goodness, even in time of greatest want. Brother Tancred, the prior of the convent, Brother Odo of Rome, and Brother Henry of the same place, Brother Laurence of England, Brother Gandion, and Brother John, of Rome, and many others who were present at this miracle, related it to Sister Cecilia, and to the other sisters who were then still living on the other side of the Tiber." It is to Sister Cecilia that we owe this beautiful narration, and so highly was the memory of this miracle prized by the Order, that, from that time to the present, the lowest tables are the first served.

It is this "Visit of the Angels" which is still to be seen on the "Ark of St. Dominic," as sculptured by the hand of the great artist, Niccola Pisano, and the beauty of the two angels continues to excite the admiration of the most refined critics on religious art.

So fascinating is the life of St. Dominic, so tender a grace lingers around his least acts and his most casual

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words, that it is with difficulty I cut short the narrative of his labors and of his death. But something remains to be said, even here, beyond the mere story of the life of St. Dominic. I have said that the visit of the angels to give food to the brethren in a time of sharp necessity, had been commemorated in the beautiful bas-relief on the "Ark of St. Dominic" (as the shrine is called which contained his beloved and venerated relics), and this is only one of several exquisite designs on that wonderful work of art, still to be seen at Bologna. These designs illustrate several of the miracles worked by St. Dominic; viz., the miracle of restoring to life a young lord, named Napoleone; the fiery ordeal in Languedoc, when the flames refused to consume the writings of St. Dominic; the vision of St. Dominic, when the holy apostles, SS. Peter and Paul, appeared to him, presenting to him the staff of a missionary and the book of the Holy Scriptures; both the Staff and the Book being, ever after, the companions of his journeys. The scene is also represented in which St. Dominic gives the Holy Scriptures to his own Friars Preachers, before sending them to proclaim that Divine Word, of which he had said, "The seed will bear fruit if it is sown; it will but moulder if you hoard it up." Between these pictured legends is an exquisite statue of the Madonna with her Divine Son in her arms, as if to express the love of St. Dominic for this "Mother of fair love, of fear, of knowledge, and of holy hope." This Ark of St. Dominic, the pride not only of the city of Bologna,

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but of entire Christendom, was erected to contain the body of the saint, and shows how the ages crown the humble with just honors. When St. Dominic was dying, his disciples, knowing an affectionate strife would arise for the possession of his relics, asked him, where he would be buried. He replied, "Under the feet of my brethren." Now, that sanctified body is known to have inspired its own sepulchre, and to have thus added another proof to those already existing, of the holy connection between religion and art.

The Dominican Order, founded, as we have seen, by an enthusiastic and accomplished scholar, has been the nurse, not only of sacred letters and pulpit eloquence, but of religious art. There is no one who travels, intelligently, through the beautiful cities of Italy, who does not search out the works of the lay Brother, "Fra Angelico da Fiesole," or the Angelical Brother, also called the *Blessed* Angelico; and the eye turns from the master-pieces of Raphael himself to the celestial visions of the Dominican friar, fixed on the panel or the wall. Fra Angelico illuminated the choral books of the monastery, in which he lived, in a manner to excite the admiration of all succeeding ages, and he also decorated with his inspired pencil, dipped, one might say, in the very colors of paradise, the tabernacles and the altars, the chapter-room of the Order, and the cells of the religious. The favored brethren in that Florentine convent walked, daily, among those seraphic pictures that seem, even in copies and engravings, to bring Heaven to earth. One of these pictures

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I find described in a way to quicken the most ardent desire in every soul, not only to see this picture, but to behold, and participate in, the joys it represents. As the object of this book is to rouse a lively interest, not only in sacred literature, but also in sacred art, I do not hesitate to copy out for you this description by one who, himself a Dominican, has written two choice volumes on the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, of his noble Order. The writer says that this picture which he is describing, is really made up of three, the *Last Judgment* occupying the middle and largest of the three arches. On the left of the Last Judgment, Fra Angelico painted Hell; yet the gentle spirit of the good friar could not bring itself to express the casting away of the wicked by their Omnipotent Judge, in any other way than by a wave of the hand, and a face turned forever away from those whose hearts had been turned away from Him; from Him who was alone worthy to be their joy. But, "where this painter triumphs, and establishes his title to the name of Angelico, with which the people honored him, is on the right side of the picture, where we behold the elect. Who can see these graceful little figures and not be enamored of virtue? Who is it that does not yearn to taste the holy and ineffable joys of these blessed beings, who, having fought the good fight, and completed the term of their exile, are now approaching their true country to enjoy that reward for which they have longed, and for the sake of which they have suffered so many afflictions? They all have their eyes and

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arms turned towards their Redeemer, and they seem to bless and thank Him for having placed them among His elect. But more charming than even this, are the kisses and embraces which the elect interchange with the angels who protected and guided them on the path of peril, as, kneeling, they clasp each other in heavenly affection. These greetings ended, we see them linking hands and gracefully dancing on a sweet meadow, enameled with the most beauteous flowers. Their garments glisten with innumerable little stars; the head of each is wreathed with a garland of white and red roses, whilst a brilliant little flame burns on the forehead of each angel. Then, light, airy, graceful, and, even during the dance, absorbed in ecstatic contemplation, carolling and singing, they advance toward the celestial Jerusalem; and the nearer they approach to it, the more ethereal and luminous do their bodies become; till at last, arrived at the gates of the holy city, they appear to be transmuted into the most subtile and resplendent spirits; and then, two by two, holding each other's hand, they are introduced into eternal beatitude." Is there a little heart, on the whole round world, that would not follow in that train of angels and saints, and enter with them the gates to eternal bliss?

I have already spoken of another picture by Fra Angelico, the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, into which he introduced the likeness of St. Dominic and of many others. He painted this subject, "The

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Coronation," several times, and always with the most entrancing beauty of expression.

Fra Bartolommeo, another religious painter of great merit, is claimed by the Dominicans. He was not only a friar, but a *preaching* friar, and we read in the Dominican annals that he was the pastor of a parish, and often laid down his palette and brushes to attend to the wants of his people. But besides this Fra Bartolommeo, there was another, called Fra Bartolommeo della Porta, and this last is the one most generally known, and spoken of. To him we owe the St. Stephen which illustrates this volume. In my portfolio is a large photograph from Fra Bartolommeo's sketch of the evangelist, St. Mark, from the very drawing made by his own hand. It brings the great painters very near to us when we can see a perfect sun-picture of their sketches. The pictures of Fra Bartolommeo are eagerly sought for, both in colors and engravings.

But it is not by paintings and sculptures, alone, that the Order of St. Dominic has helped to civilize the most polished nations. To the Dominican architects we owe some of the noblest edifices in Italy, besides those famous bridges that from age to age, one after another, have spanned the river Arno, at Florence; and, so long as the beautiful church of San Maria Novella is the pride of Florence, the names of the Florentine Dominicans, Fra Sisto and Fra Ristoro, will prove how much the world of art and of beauty is indebted to the Order of St. Dominic.

There is still another debt of gratitude which we,

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as Americans, owe to St. Dominic and to his Order, a debt specially our own.

After the discovery of America by that saintly navigator, Christopher Columbus, great pains was taken by Columbus, and by the ecclesiastical authorities of Spain, to fulfill the highest wish of the heart of the pious discoverer; which was, to carry the knowledge of Christ to the nations sitting in darkness. If you open any good history of America, you will see the name of Father Bartholomew Las Casas; you will also read how much he did for the poor Indians, who, to the horror and grief of Columbus, were actually made slaves by the avaricious cruelty of those stronger and and more civilized races who came to the Islands after they were discovered. Las Casas did not hesitate to protest against this monstrous injustice, this perfidy and bad faith, on the part of the whites. He made four voyages to Spain in behalf of the oppressed Indians, pleaded their cause before courts and monarchs, and brought this crying wrong to the notice of Cardinal Ximenes; and all these things coming to the ears of the Pope, Paul III., he pronounced "a sentence of excommunication against all those who should make slaves of the Indians, or deprive them of their goods." For sixty years Las Casas labored for their rights as men, for their souls as heirs of heaven; and, to this day, we, as Americans, owe to Las Casas, the Dominican friar, that the curse of the enslaved Indian is not resting upon us.

St. Dominic is honored, in the Office of the Church,

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on the 4th of August. He died at Bologna, on the 6th of August, the feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord, 1221; but as he promised to his friars, he has done more for them since his death than during his life; full as that life was of labor and of prayer, every line of it fragrant with the "odor of sanctity," and beaming, like the star on his infant forehead, with the "beauty of holiness."

The next time you say your rosary, will you not remember St. Dominic? Remember, also, to thank him for having left behind him this pleasant way of saying your prayers; asking him, from your heart, to pray for you, that you may be worthy of his protection, and may, at last, enter into his exceeding great reward.



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SAINT JEROME.

IF you run your eye carefully over the Calendar, or list of saints, for September, you will see, at the very last day of the month, a name which may not be familiar to you, but which is a great and shining name in the Church of God. Sometimes there is a special devotion, for years and even generations, to some one saint, and parents give the name of that saint to their children. I do not know one child who has been baptized Jerome, yet this is the name of the great saint that I shall tell you about to-day.

A certain nun used to say of her patron, St. John Baptist, that he was "a very old-fashioned saint." St. Jerome is one of the old-fashioned saints; but, I confess, I am partial to them, and it is, perhaps, for this very reason, that I admire so much this ancient doctor and confessor.

St. Jerome is one of the Four Latin Fathers; and, as such, we see him, in magnificent old pictures, among these Four Fathers, grouped around the Madonna and

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Infant Christ, or the glorified Redeemer, dressed in the rich scarlet hat and robes of a cardinal; and he is venerated like St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Gregory. St. Jerome lived more than a thousand years ago, and, all through these ages, he has been looked up to by popes, cardinals, bishops, doctors, and priests—for the Church never outgrows her saints.

Before God, "a thousand years is as one day;" but for us, mortals, to know that a fellow-mortal has been a saint more than a thousand years, has, for more than a thousand years, received the veneration of the whole Church, and has been, all that time, named in her Sacred Office, and all that time has had one day set apart for his honor, to know that this fellow-mortal has been more than a thousand years in the immediate presence of God, is to gain a wonderful idea of the glory it is to be a saint.

St. Jerome, then, is our patron for September. He was born so early as 342 years after the birth of Our Lord, or about one thousand five hundred years ago. A long time to look back, yet St. Jerome tells us, how, when a young student in Rome, he used to visit, with his school-fellows, the cemeteries of the martyrs, or, what we call, the Catacombs.

We must remember that the history of these martyrs, in the time of St. Jerome, was still as fresh in the minds of Christians as the history of the heroes of the "Revolution of '76," is to us; for, less than a hundred years before, less than fifty years before, such martyrs as St. Agnes, St. Sebastian and St. Pancratius, and hundreds

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of others, all dear to the hearts of the people of God, had been seen giving up their lives for Christ, and leaving their bodies to find their way, by the hands of pious and courageous Christians, to the Catacombs. It cannot be supposed that an intelligent youth, like St. Jerome, living so near the time of these lights, shining, as they did, amid the dark night of pagan persecution, did not know what that faith was for which they died, or that his own faith did not seem all the more precious for knowing that it was the very same for which so many noble souls had joyfully given up friends, wealth, pleasure, good name, and life itself. As I have said again and again in these pages, there is no way of learning to love and prize our dear old religion, like that of reflecting upon the sacrifices, which the saints, of all ages, have esteemed themselves happy in making for its sake. And, to this remark, so often repeated, I will now add another, that I wish you to remember; which is, that those who suffered for the Christian faith, and suffered in such a manner as to be obliged to answer the questions of their pagan judges, and to make very nice distinctions as to what they were bound to believe and what they were not bound to believe, have a right to be looked upon as well instructed Christians, and their faith to be regarded as the one approved by Christ and by His Church; and, therefore, as the faith which Christ and His true Church still desire us to believe. As I have said above, it is not to be supposed that St. Jerome, living so near the time at which these martyrs confessed to the faith of

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Christ by their deaths, did not know what that faith was. We must, therefore, look upon St. Jerome as one of those saints whose testimony should be taken as to what the martyrs really believed, and suffered for; and, knowing this, we have a short way of deciding what we are to believe ourselves; for I have never seen any sincere Christian who did not wish to believe exactly what those early saints and martyrs believed, who lived so near to the time of Christ, and of His apostles, as to be in no danger of misunderstanding the Christian doctrine. You can now see why St. Jerome has this distinguished rank among the Four Latin Fathers and the great doctors of the Church.

St. Jerome's native place was Stridonium, a small town upon the borders of Pannonia, Dalmatia and Italy, near Aquileia. His father, whose name was Eusebius, and who was of good family and had a large estate, knowing that a sound education was the most precious of all the advantages he could give to his children, took great care to have his son instructed in the first principles of piety and literature at home, and then sent him to Rome. In this city he became master of both the Latin and the Greek languages, and was so eloquent that he pleaded at the Roman bar. But, although he was making such progress in worldly learning, he not only made no progress in heavenly things, but he forgot the lessons of piety learned in his youth. The elegant scholar left this pagan school without being soiled by any gross vices, but he had lost the spirit and temper of a Christian, and he after-

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wards confessed and lamented the vanity and the worldliness of his life at that time.

Although he had left the school, he was still anxious to improve, and resolved to travel. The wise Thomas à Kempis, says, that "those who travel much are seldom holy;" and the mere visiting of celebrated shrines, does not make a person devout. It depends upon the spirit in which we visit holy places, whether we are made better or worse by travel. Almighty God, who saw the soul of the young Jerome, as not even his good father could see it, had designs of mercy towards him, and, by the Divine Providence, his travels, undertaken only out of a desire for learning, became the means of his returning to the piety of his earlier years. The Romans had founded several famous schools in ancient Gaul, now France, and especially at Marseilles, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Autun, Lyons and Triers. It was Triers that drew the attention of young Jerome. It had been his greatest pleasure, at Rome, to collect a choice library, and to read all the best authors, and such was his enjoyment of these books, that he forgot to eat or drink. He bought a great many books, copied several, and had his friends copy for him. It was in the midst of this same studious life at Triers, about the year 370, that the grace of God so touched his heart that he recovered his youthful fervor, gave up all the vanity of his life, and resolved to devote himself to the service of Jesus Christ in a life of continence. From this time his ardor for virtue was even greater than any he had

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before felt for worldly learning, and he turned the course of his studies into the new, and far more delightful, channels, which Christianity had opened to her devout scholars. Being still intent on adding treasures to his library, he copied at Triers, St. Hilary's book on the Psalms; those "Psalms of David," which Jerome afterwards translated with such zeal. His travels, from this time, were directed by his love for Christian learning, his friendships were made with Christian scholars, and when he returned to Rome, it was to devote himself to his studies in a holy retirement.

But he soon found that he could not lead this life of retirement in his own country, nor even in Rome; and, being in earnest to do something for God, and knowing that he must first sanctify his own soul, he sought to do so after the manner of many pious persons in those ages. He visited holy hermits, going from one desert, or wilderness, to another, to gain from their conversation the secret of a perfect life. After these visits to the hermits he spent some time in Antioch, studying and writing, and from Antioch went into a hideous desert, where he passed four years in solitary study and in the exercises of a most fervent piety. After this he visited Palestine or the Holy Land, and, if even worldly people are deeply moved by visiting the sacred places where Our Lord walked upon earth, with what devotion must not this great saint have kneeled upon the very spots where Jesus Christ lived and suffered for us! He made Bethlehem

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his home; Bethlehem, that "little one among the princes of Judah," where the Eternal Wisdom lived, Incarnate, under the form of a feeble infant, and where the greatest intellect was continually in a school of humility. But as it was not to gratify a devout sentiment, nor even to secure his own salvation alone, that St. Jerome lived, he began to study everything around him which could throw any light on the Holy Scripture; putting himself under Jewish doctors to learn the Hebrew language, and faithfully seeking out every particular concerning the places named in sacred history.

About the year 380, our saint went to Constantinople, there to study the Holy Scriptures under St. Gregory Nazianzen, who was then bishop of Constantinople. When St. Gregory left that city, St. Jerome returned to Palestine; but the Pope, Damasus, called him to Rome, and kept him near his own person as his secretary. At Rome, among other duties, St. Jerome was the spiritual director of such holy women as St. Paula, Eustochium, Ascella and her sister Marcella, and Fabiola, and we have volumes of letters, in our Catholic libraries, written by this saint, directing the education of children and the pursuits of Christian women.

Very tender are the teachings of St. Jerome in behalf of these daughters of good mothers. "As soon as she can speak," he writes, "let her learn some part of the Psalms. Let her have little letters, made of boxwood or ivory, the names of which she must know,

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that she may play with them, and that learning may be a diversion. When a little older, let her form each letter in wax with her finger, guided by another's hand; then let her be invited, by prizes and presents, to join syllables together, and to write the names of the patriarchs down from Adam."

You will think, by these instructions quoted from St. Jerome, that the little Roman girls in his time, needed very much the same help as the little girls who are, to day, learning to read in some quiet school in the United States; and we should go far, I think, before we should find any ladies in modern society more zealous in learning, or more patient in teaching, Christian doctrine, than these holy ladies who were trained by St. Jerome. He tells us that Paula, Marcella, Blesilla and Eustochium, spoke, wrote, and recited the Psalms in the Hebrew, as perfectly as in the Greek and Latin tongues.

The history of these noble Roman ladies is one that every child, every girl, should know by heart; and there is nothing more beautiful in Christian friendships than the regard cherished by St. Jerome for these devout Christian women, and the veneration cherished by them for their saintly director.

From Rome St. Jerome went to Egypt, to improve still more in sacred learning; from Egypt to Palestine again, and to Bethlehem, which seemed to draw him, as a magnet draws steel. From this birthplace of our dear Lord his good deeds ran, like clear waters from a pure fountain, to bless the whole world. But the

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work which he there completed, after years of devout study, and which the Church has crowned with more than approbation—with her gratitude—was the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Latin, the language most generally spoken among Christians at that time and which may still be called the language of the Church. To this translation St. Jerome added such explanations of the Sacred Books as a knowledge of the languages in which they were written, and of the people among whom they were composed, fitted him, above any one living at that time, to give. And, so far is the world and its scholars from having outgrown this translation by St. Jerome, that no one, whether Catholic or Protestant, would think of translating the Bible into any language, without making himself familiar with the "Vulgate," as that translation of the Bible, is called which was made by St. Jerome. Those priests who study to make the meaning of the Holy Scripture more easily understood by their people, or who attempt the great labor of translating them to suit our way of speaking at the present day, always feel a special devotion to St. Jerome. Within a few years an archbishop of the United States, the late Most Reverend Francis Patrick Kenrick, D. D., translated the whole Bible into our English tongue, with very full notes of explanation; and St. Jerome was one of his patrons, as well as authorities, in this great work.

Those people who find the silly, and, too often, the profane poetry and stories of newspapers and maga-

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zines more entertaining than the wonderful history and sublime poetry of the Scriptures, can hardly understand the ardent love of these scholars and saints for the inspired Word of God; for, so far from grudging their study and labor, they offered, as a sacrifice of love, the fairest and most fruitful years of their life to this work. Indeed, with most of the saintly translators and commentators of the Bible, as with St. Jerome, St. Bede, and our own beloved Archbishop Kenrick, this work seemed to be the crowning glory of their lives, the last and the most perfect, from which they soon passed to their most sweet reward.

Let the example of this shining saint of olden time, and the saints of our own, inspire you, my young friends, with an admiration, as well as a religious respect, for the Holy Scripture. Never weary of its wonderful story of God's dealings with his people, nor of the touching story of "the Word made flesh," and of the apostles who succeeded our Redeemer as the teachers of His truth. The veneration and love that will grow out of this admiring study of the Bible, will save you from the error of those who rashly presume to judge of its meaning, and, too often, to despise its authority. Remember the learned men who have submitted their life-long researches upon the Bible and its meaning to the decision of the Church, divinely inspired to interpret its most hidden sense, and, imitating their humility, read the Holy Scriptures so as to grow more and more in charity, in hope, and in a steadfast, courageous faith in God, and in the Church

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which has so faithfully preserved this record of His divine promises, and also their fulfillment.

St. Jerome has always been as much in favor with artists as with theologians. Mrs. Jameson says, "There is scarcely a collection of pictures in which we do not find a St. Jerome, either doing penance in the desert, or writing his famous translation, or meditating on the mystery of the Incarnation," and she asks us to "dwell for a moment on his own description of his solitary life, that we may understand with what a literal and circumstantial truth the painters have expressed it in their pictures." His "companions," he tells us, "were scorpions and wild beasts;" his "home, a recess among caves and precipices;" his "limbs were rough with sackcloth, and his skin so burned and so squalid that he might have been taken for an Ethiopian;" but, Mrs. Jameson adds, "neither his great sorrows, nor his four years of solitude and penance in the desert, could destroy the burning enthusiasm of this celebrated man" for virtue and for learning.

The picture which I have selected to grace this sketch of the life of St. Jerome, is by Titian (the same artist that painted the martyrdom of St. Laurence), and it shows how the soul of this noble artist was inspired by the life of St. Jerome in his rocky solitude, absorbed in contrite meditation upon that Redeemer whose sufferings were so plainly to be seen in the crucifix, which the holy recluse had suspended among the branches of the trees overhanging his cave.

In this, as in all the pictures of St. Jerome, the lion

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is seen at his side, and the legend that has given to the king of the desert this distinguished place, is worthy to be read and remembered.

One evening as St. Jerome sat within the gates of his monastery at Bethlehem, a lion entered, limping as if in pain; and all the brethren, when they saw the lion, fled in great terror; but St. Jerome arose and went forward to meet him, receiving him as a guest. Then the king of all the beasts, the terror of men as well as of animals, lifted up his paw, with one blow of which he could have destroyed any man on earth, holding it towards St. Jerome with all the docility and gentleness of a child; and, on examining it, our great doctor and scholar found a cruel thorn fixed in the lion's paw, which he skillfully drew out, and afterwards tended the lion until the wound was quite healed. The grateful beast became so attached to our saint that he chose to stay with him rather than to go back to his native desert and to his natural companions, and he also found out ways to return to St. Jerome the care that he had given to him. In one picture of the death of St. Jerome, the lion is represented as roaring with grief, and in another he is holding his paw to St. Jerome; but usually, as in this picture by Titian, he lies beside his beloved friend, in that majesty of repose suitable in a dumb companion of one whose contemplations were of God, and of eternity.

During all the General Councils that have been held by the Roman Pontiffs as successors of St. Peter, like

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the Council, which, as I write, is assembling in Rome at the call and under the care of Pius IX., we find them turning over the writings of St. Jerome and the other "Fathers," not only to learn the opinions of these wise scholars on matters of Christian doctrine, but to know what was really the belief of the Christian people in those ages. The faith, once given in charge to the apostles, and by them given in charge to the popes, bishops, and priests of later generations, was garnered up by the fathers and doctors of the Church in their heavy folio volumes of parchment, like the honey of bees in so many richly stored hives, to be read by the faithful in all ages. And, if all cannot be learned, if all cannot gather such treasures for the present or future generations, if all cannot read them in the languages in which they were written, it is still consoling to remember, that God never allows us to be ignorant of anything necessary to salvation, if we, on our part, are careful to use all the opportunities given us to know the truth, and to be instructed in matters of faith and practices of devotion; and, especially, if we listen, faithfully, to the sermons and instructions of our pastors, who have been instructed for the very purpose of instructing us. At least, let us follow the footsteps of St. Jerome at the lowly distance of those, who, to all mere worldly learning, prefer that which makes the learned and the ignorant, alike, wise unto salvation; or, of those who use their learning to build up faith, not to pull down.

Towards the end of his life St. Jerome was inter-

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rupted in his studies by roving barbarians, who found their way through Egypt into Palestine; and after this, some of his enemies, who hated him for his defence of the truth, sent a band of robbers to attack the helpless monks and nuns at Bethlehem. They set fire to all the monasteries, and our saint, who was then very old, with great difficulty escaped from their fury to a strong castle. After this storm had passed by, he returned to his books and to his writing, until a fever released his soul from the prison of his mortal body on the 30th of September, in the year 420. He was buried in a vault among the ruins of his own monastery, at Bethlehem, but his relics lie, at present, in the church of St. Mary Major, at Rome.

St. Jerome made it his chief employment in his solitude to meditate upon death, and the Divine Judgment; and it is to St. Jerome that we owe this impressive sentence; "Whether I eat or drink, or whatever else I do, the dreadful trumpet of the last day seems always sounding in my ears! Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!"

The fear of St. Jerome, which had so much to do with his being a saint, was the fear that springs from the love of God; for how dreadful does it seem, to a saint, to be forever banished from the presence of God! No one need be ashamed of this fear, and we are told, by Thomas à Kempis, that this fear will cast out all other fear from our souls," so that those who fear God are the only brave people in the world.

Ask St. Jerome, on his feast day, to obtain for you

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this holy fear of God, and then the trump of the Last Day will have, for your ears, a sound, not of terror, but of holy joy.



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SAINT LIOBA.

IT would not surprise me to find that not ten of my young readers had ever heard of St. Lioba; but some of you may remember having seen her name on the list of saints, or, in reading Butler's "Lives," you may have been struck by something which made you linger over the columns devoted to "St. Lioba, Abbess." If so, you will be glad to meet her again; and to me she comes out of the mists of ages to take her place on these pages, with a grace so fresh, with a simple naturalness of feeling, sanctified, not crushed out, by her supernatural devotion, so much in harmony with the races to which many of us belong, that I choose her, as I have already chosen St. Bede and St. Dunstan, to represent us among the nations, and to show how the peculiarities of race and clime may sometimes give a peculiar charm even to a saint.

In a small collection of historical sketches, like this one of Patron Saints, there must be some limit to one's wishes; I have not, therefore, attempted to bring for-

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ward the lives of many saints well known, and very dear, both to you and to me. There is a brilliant constellation of Irish saints which I hope to bring out at some future time, in a way to give you a new interest in them; and there are Welsh and Scotch saints, German and African saints, so woven in with the history, and poetry, and the beautiful traditions, of the early Christian ages, that one turns with difficulty from the charming narratives that have come down to us concerning them, rich in the association of some of the fairest ages of the world. There are, also, American saints, and these I have passed over still more unwillingly; but it has been necessary to do so, if I would keep to my first plan; and this plan is one that will allow me, at any time, to continue our sketches.

It would sometimes seem as if one out of every two saint, in any collection of lives, was either French or Italian, so often do we find these nations honored by the choicest gifts of heaven in the persons of saints. Yet it is by our fault that we know so little of our own saints. If one-half the trouble that is taken to read the annals of other nations, were spent upon reading our own, we should find examples of holiness beautifying our national history, like the jewels on an embroidered chasuble, whose lustre has a double claim upon our love and veneration. We see crowds of people following the beaten track of guides and hand-books in their travels, who visit every shrine in France and Italy, but never turn to the holy Isle of Iona, to see where St. Columba lived with his monks,

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like a father among his devoted children, with a patriarchal simplicity of authority, of affection and pathos, such as the world can never hope to see again; who can scale every crag of the Alps, but stand suddenly aghast, before the prospect of a wild voyage to that northern island whose mutilated crosses, and ruined abbey, tell where the most poetic of all the sons of the Island of Saints passed his voluntary exile. We hope to see the picturesque saints of the north taking their just place in the affections of the youth of coming generations. To study the saints of our own race is to learn how God expects us to become saints. It is to give you some hints as to the way in which Celts, and Anglo-Saxons, and Americans, may serve God with a saintly perfection, that I have chosen St. Lioba as one of the patrons for September. There is many a girl who would shrink, appalled, from the austerities of a St. Catherine of Sienna, or a St. Theresa, who will see, in St. Lioba, a type of sanctity fitted to her own mental and physical habits; and, before she knows it, she will be on the way to a solid, practical, and well-balanced sanctity. Half of the piety in the world is lost, so far as its fitness to the every day necessities is concerned, by these very causes. Our good American girls try to be like Italian and French saints, instead of trying to be, simply, saints of God; of God, who created them, in whatever country He has seen fit to place them, with the intention of having them become types of their race in the order of sanctity, and benefiting their race by the exercise of natural

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virtues in a supernatural degree. I wish you all to think about this, and believe that sanctity is the same in all nations; as the soul of man is the same among all nations; but, like that soul, clothed upon by the peculiarities of race and clime, which peculiarities are not to be forced upon other races in other climes, any more than dress and social habits.

A charming example of what I wish to make you understand about this occurs to me as I write, and I shall give you the story with its real names.

On one of the warmest days of this last summer, coming into my little parlor, I saw two women seated there, dressed in black serge gowns and cloaks, and in bonnets exactly like the cape-bonnets that many little girls still wear, made of a straight piece of black barège, with narrow strips of pasteboard run in, to make them stand out from the face. You have all seen these cape-bonnets made of pretty colored cambric. Those worn by the two women in black dresses and cloaks, as I have said, were of black barège, and they gave an air of the most rustic humility to their costume. I welcomed them as "Sisters," of some Order unknown to me, and found that only the youngest one could speak English; but a letter in choice French, from Rev. Father P—— of Robinsonville, near Green Bay, in Wisconsin, gave me a clue to the mystery before me. It introduced to me Sister Adèle, a humble Belgian woman, to whom had been granted, undoubtedly, an apparition of Our Blessed Lady,

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leaving her to tell me, through her young interpreter, the story of her graces and of her labors.

Twelve years ago, Sister Adèle, living in the same neighborhood as now, was in the habit of going to mass every Sunday, though she could do this only by walking eleven miles to the place where mass was celebrated. One summer day as she was returning through the dense woods from mass, she saw a bright, luminous atmosphere in the woods around her, and from this luminous atmosphere there came forth the figure of a most lovely lady, white and shining, her face covered with a veil, her robe falling over her feet, and her hands joined, as one sees the Blessed Virgin represented in pictures of the Immaculate Conception. Our good, humble sister Adèle, recognized the Virgin Mother, and full of joy, kept the vision in her heart, telling no one of the heavenly consolation given to her. A few weeks after, as she was on her way to mass, the same lovely apparition made her step light and her heart joyful; and that same afternoon before sunset, as she was returning, the same white and shining figure stood before her. This time, encouraged by its repeated appearance, she spoke in her humble way, to the veiled Vision, saying, "Dear Mistress, what do you wish me to do?" Good Sister Adèle did not think that the Blessed Virgin was thus appearing to her, repeatedly, for her spiritual consolation, alone; she knew that something was wanted of her. Our Blessed Lady's reply was, "Gather around you the neglected children in this wild country, running

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idle about the woods, and teach them what they should know for salvation." "Gladly would I gather them in, dear Mistress," said Sister Adèle, "but how shall I teach them, who know so little myself?" "Teach them," said the radiant visitor, "their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the cross, and how to approach the sacraments. This is what I wish you to do;" and the beautiful vision, with its luminous atmosphere, disappeared, and left the dense woods as solemn as before, while dear Sister Adèle walked on to her own humble home with her heavenly commission in her heart. You may believe that Sister Adèle did not put off doing what our Blessed Lady had asked of her, but began to collect the children running wild about the woods and living in the log cabins of the neighborhood. Sister Adèle had no "price," for teaching, no tuition bills to make out to her pupils, even at the end of a whole year; and their parents, finding the school a free school, were glad to send their children. Once started, there was no lack of scholars; and very soon, Sister Adèle found that her room was too small for her school. Then this courageous woman undertook to beg, from more favored communities, the money necessary for building a large school-house, then a chapel, and, finally, to raise a home for the religious, whom she hoped to persuade to assist her in her great work. It was on this errand that she had come to our city, where churches, and schools, and sisterhoods, flourish, and there were few hearts on which her appeal fell un-

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heeded. Every year, on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, a religious procession celebrates the appearance of the Blessed Virgin to Sister Adèle; thus keeping in mind the origin of her humble school of instruction for these wandering lambs of the fold of Christ, which has changed this wilderness into a garden of delights to the Saviour of souls. Sister Adèle does not yet belong to any religious Order, but if she ever does, I hope she will wear her simple cape-bonnet, as a memorial of the rustic garb in which she met the Queen of angels and of saints, and received her commission to teach the little ones of the 'household of faith.'

Sister Adèle's vocation is one very liberally distributed among the Catholic women of America; and if not always attended by such impressive circumstances, the same zeal, courage and cheerfulness, are the dispositions required in fulfilling it. And these very dispositions we shall find in St. Lioba, who may, very aptly, be chosen as the patron of teachers, for she was, ages ago, chosen by the great St. Boniface to assist him in his missionary labors, by teaching the sisters and daughters of, at that time, the barbarous Germans.

Her biographer tells us that she was descended from an illustrious English-Saxon family, and born at Wimbourne, which name signifies, *Fountain of wine.* Ebba, her pious mother, was very nearly related to St. Boniface of Mentz, and as we often see in pious families what seems an inherited inclination to sanc-

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tity, vocations to the priesthood and a religious life, so the good Ebba gave proof that she was a spiritual cousin of the heroic St. Boniface. She had lived long in wedlock without being blessed with children, yet, when this lovely little daughter was given to her, she offered her to God from her birth, and trained her up to value the world as it deserves to be valued by the children of God, and the heirs of heaven. Ebba placed her, while still young, in the great convent of Wimbourne, in her native country. She was called Lioba, or the *Beloved One*, because of her exceeding beauty; and her accomplishments were such as fitted her to teach others, and even to rouse our admiration for "a nun, living in the middle of the eighth century in a distant abbey of a half barbarous country." There is a letter, written by St. Lioba to the German apostle, St. Boniface, that gives her history better than it can be given for her. This letter is written from Wimbourne, where Cuthburga, the sister of Ina, the king, was established by him in a convent belonging to their race and country. It was situated in a fertile tract near the royal residence of the kings of Wessex, one of the kingdoms of Britain according to its ancient division, and occupying the southwest portion of what is now England. The abbess, Cuthburga, formerly queen of Northumbria, a kingdom in the extreme north of England, and who had served her novitiate in the noble and learned convent of Barking on the Thames, brought with her, to her own house, the spirit and habits of her first monastic home, and

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Wimbourne soon became still more celebrated than Barking, for its literary studies. Here, then, we find our St. Lioba, developed by a course of sound study while she practised the most sublime lessons in piety, and, unconsciously, preparing herself to carry to other regions the blessings of her own religious lot. It was under the good Abbess Tetta, who was governing a community of five hundred nuns, that St. Lioba wrote the following letter to her kinsman, St. Boniface.

"To the most reverend lord and bishop, Boniface, most dear to me in Christ, and, further, united to me by the ties of blood, Leobgitha, the last of the handmaids of Christ, health and salvation.

"I beg your clemency to deign to recollect the friendship which united you to my father, Tinne, an inhabitant of Wessex, who departed from this world eight years ago, that you may pray for the repose of his soul. I also recommend to you my mother Ebba, your kinswoman, as you know better than me, who still lives in great suffering and has been for a long time overwhelmed with her infirmities. I am their only daughter; and God grant, that unworthy as I am, I may have the honor of claiming you as my brother, for no man of our kindred inspires me with the same confidence that you do. I have taken care to send you this little present, not as being worthy of your greatness, but that it may remind you of my littleness, and that you may not forget me on account of the distance that separates us. What I chiefly ask of you, dearest brother, is, that you will defend me, by the buckler of your

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prayers, from the hidden snares of the enemy. I beg you to excuse the rustic style of this letter, and that your courtesy will not refuse the few words of answer that I so much desire. You will find below some lines, which I have attempted to compose according to the rules of poetic art, not from self-confidence, but to exercise the weak little genius that God has given me, and to ask the help of your elegant mind. I have learned all that I know from Eadburga, my mistress, who gives herself to the profound study of the divine law. Farewell; live a long and happy life; and pray for me.

"May the Almighty Judge, who made the earth,
And glorious in His Father's kingdom reigns,
Preserve your chaste fire, warm as at its birth,
Till time for you shall lose its rights and pains."

St. Boniface responded very heartily to this appeal of his amiable kinswoman, and a correspondence was at once opened between them which resulted in the call, afterwards made upon her, to assist him in the mission to which he at last fell a martyr.

My young friends, especially the girls, may like to know what sort of learning was pursued, so ardently, by this young nun, educated by the studious Eadburga, and we copy, for their gratification, this list of her accomplishments. "Instructed from her childhood in grammar, poetry, and the liberal arts, she increased her treasures of learning by assiduous reading. She studied, attentively, the Old and New Testaments, and committed a great part of them to memory. She

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was familiar with the writings of the Fathers, and with the decrees and canons of the Church. As we have seen, she could write the Latin tongue with a graceful simplicity, both in prose and verse. When not engaged in study, she worked with her hands, as was enjoined by the rule, but she greatly preferred reading or hearing others read, to any other employment. Indeed it was not easy to satisfy her in this respect. After she became abbess she insisted upon all those under her charge taking that mid-day repose allowed by the rule of St. Benedict, chiefly, as she said, because the want of sleep takes away the love of reading. But when she herself lay down at these times to rest, she had some of her pupils to read the Scriptures by the side of her couch, and they could not omit or mispronounce a word without her correcting it, though apparently she might be asleep. Yet all this learning was accompanied with a modesty, and humility, that made her seek in all things to be regarded as the least in the house. There was nothing of arrogance in her behavior, nothing of bitterness in her words. She was admirable in her understanding as she was boundless in her charity. She liked to wash the feet of her spiritual children, and to serve them at table, and she did this when she herself was fasting. Her countenance was truly angelic, always sweet and joyful, though she never indulged in laughter. No one ever saw her angry, and her aspect agreed with her name, which in Saxon means Beloved, and in Greek, Philomena."

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It was in 748 that the letters from St. Boniface reached the quiet cloisters of Wimbourne, requesting that Lioba and her cousin Thecla, and Walburga, sister to the two companions of St. Boniface, Winibald and Wilibald, might be sent over to him, together with as many of their companions as might be willing to share in their enterprise. Thirty nuns at once offered themselves, and the little colony, after a stormy passage across the sea to Antwerp, was met, at Mentz, by St. Boniface. He immediately proceeded to establish Lioba in a monastery he had built for her at Bischoffsheim, where she very soon collected around her a large community of virgins, consecrated to the service of God in Germany.

If I did not hope to write for you, at some future time, the life of St. Boniface, I should be tempted to put some of the picturesque incidents of his career into this sketch of St. Lioba; but as I hope to give them to you more at length, I will only go out of my way to tell you something of her companion, St. Walburga. This brave company of zealous nuns stopped at Antwerp several days, and a grotto is still shown in the ancient church of that city dedicated to St. Walburga, where she is said to have prayed. Walburga did not remain with Lioba, but went on to Thuringia, that favored country, blessed, centuries afterwards, by the presence of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Here her brother, Winibald, was superior of seven houses of monks, having "converted the wild pagan forest into a smiling land of woods and pastures, where

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all the arts of civilized life were taught and practiced, and over which the good abbot was allowed a paternal sway."

Walburga and her nuns cultivated letters as diligently in their new forest home, as they had been accustomed to do in the dear old abbey of Wimbourne. The travels of her brother, St. Wilibald, in the Holy Land, and his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which he had often related to her and to her nuns, were afterwards written by them; and St. Walburga wrote, also, the "Life of St. Wilibald." The taste for literature among the German nuns of the tenth century may thus be traced back to our St. Lioba and her friend St. Walburga. Mabillon, who wrote about the time of the settlement of the American colonies, 1680, and who became one of the most learned of the Benedictines of St. Maur, praises the early German nuns for "Devoting themselves to study and the transcription of books with no less energy than the monks; and his praise is given in particular to those nuns of Eiken, who gave their time to reading, meditating, transcribing and painting, and to their two abbesses, Harlinda and Renilda, who wrote out the Psalter, the Four Gospels, and many other books of Holy Scripture, adorning them with liquid gold, gems and pearls."

But St. Lioba did not forget her duty to her neighbor in her books, because both the book and the neighbor were loved for God's sake, and she turned from one to the other most willingly, as God's interests required. We often feel like grudging our time for

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certain acts of devotion, or of charity, or even of civility and good neighborhood. The thought which cures this feeling is, that our time is God's; when spent for Him and in His service it is well spent; and, if well spent, we certainly need not grudge it. God, whose servants we are, as rightfully as the angels in heaven, can easily make good to us all the time spent for Him, or for His poor ones. We must carefully lay out the hours of the day and evening; but, in laying them out, let us be sure to give God His share. It was in the spirit of giving to God his share of her time, that we see St. Lioba rejoicing in every opportunity to exercise hospitality and charity to the poor. Kings and princes respected and honored her, especially Pepin, king of the French, and his two sons, Charles, or the great Charlemagne, and Carloman. Charlemagne, who reigned alone after the death of his brother, often sent for St. Lioba to his court at Aix-la-Chapelle, and treated her with the highest veneration. His queen, Hildegardis, loved her as her own soul, and took her advice in the most important matters. She would have been glad to keep our beloved saint always near her, to be assisted in her own efforts to lead a pious life by the example, and instruction, of St. Lioba; but our saint knew, too well, the dangers of living among the great ones of this world, and always hastened back to her own convent, and to the safe, and dear society of her beloved sisters in religion. Bishops often sought out St. Lioba in her peaceful retreat, and listened to her counsels.

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St. Boniface never forgot her, and a little while before he started on his mission into Friesland, where he met death as a martyr, he recommended her, most earnestly, to his friend St. Lullus, and to his monks at Fulda; entreating them to care for her with great respect and honor; declaring it to be his desire, that after her death she should be buried by his bones, that thus they might together await the resurrection, and be raised in glory to meet the Lord and be forever united in the kingdom of Divine love. After the martyrdom of St. Boniface she frequently visited Fulda, and was allowed to enter the church, by a singular privilege, in company with two older sisters, and thus assist at the Holy Mass and at the instructions; after which she would return to her cell with her companions; and when she had continued a few days in the atmosphere of the monastery of her saintly kinsman and friend, she would return to her own nunnery.

St. Lioba lived to be very old, and, by the advice of St. Lullus, she resigned the care of her large nunneries and retired to a new one, where she devoted herself with fresh ardor to all pious exercises. Queen Hildegardis invited her so pressingly to Aix-la-Chapelle, that she could not refuse this dear friend, who, under the gorgeous robe of the sovereigns of that age, kept a heart formed for the most holy and faithful friendship. After some days, St. Lioba could not be persuaded to remain any longer from her dear solitude. On taking leave of the queen, she embraced her more affectionately than usual, and kissing her

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garment, her forehead, and mouth, she said, "Farewell, precious part of my soul; may Christ, our Creator and Redeemer, grant that we may see each other without confusion in the day of judgment." She died about the year 779, and was buried at Fulda, on the north side of the high altar. Her tomb was honored with miracles, and, to several, her historian, Ralph of Fulda, assures us that he was an eye-witness.

The feast of St. Lioba is kept on the 28th day of September. I have never seen a picture of St. Lioba. The portrait of this beautiful, amiable woman, enriched by so many rare gifts of mind and of heart, and finally crowned by the grace of actual sanctity, is only found traced by the pens of those who had seen her, loved her, and rejoiced in the sunshine of her holy life, her most beautiful and winning example. How many do we see in the world, who seem born to be loved and admired, born to attract others and to draw them to heaven, falling short of the peculiar grace of their vocation by reason—of what? Simply because they use these gifts only for themselves, not for God. Lovely in their own homes, faultless, as might seem at first sight, in the discharge of all domestic and social duties, yet they never win one soul to God or to the *love* of *truth*. Their own families, even, cannot remember one, of all their charmimg acts, that could be said to have had a supernatural motive; and thus, while possessing the beauty of a St. Lioba, her power of pleasing, her charm of poetic fancy, and her intellectual tastes, they have never used

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these gifts for the benefit of their fellow-beings, or for the glory of God.

Let my young girl-readers ponder this difference between St. Lioba and, perhaps, themselves; and, pondering upon this difference, as great as between the world and heaven, let them determine to set the seal of divine love upon every natural endowment, dedicating to the service of God the fairest blossoms and the choicest fruits, which the grace of God so often produces in the sheltered paradise of a happy Christian home, as well as among the holy retreats of religion; and if, by any of those providential events that change the currents of human life you are called to teach your accomplishments, whether in or out of the convent walls, to others, remember what the civilization of Europe still owes to her Anglo-Saxon *nuns*, and believe, that from your teaching, may yet spring a race of heroes, of great historians, poets, painters, sculptors, architects, and even of saints, since by your teaching will be modeled the mothers of generations to come. You can never tell which of the countless mustard seeds of wise precept, or noble sentiment sown by you, may take root, and send forth branches for the delight of the nations. It was in this sublime spirit, we must suppose, that St. Lioba and her companions studied, wrote, and taught; and this is why the perfume of their acts has come down to us through these ages of wars and revolutions, attracting our love, and stirring up in our own souls a holy emulation of their serene courage, and their persevering labors.

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SAINT LUKE.

ISAIAH was, above all others, the prophet of the Holy Infancy, St. Jerome was its recluse and devotee; but St. Luke may be called the evangelist, poet, artist, and cantor, of the Holy Infancy, of Nazareth, and of that Bethlehem of Juda, of which it was written, "And thou Bethlehem of Juda, that art a little one among the princes of Juda, out of thee shall come the leader that shall rule my people Israel." (Mich. v. ii.) St. Matthew invites us to join the train of the three kings—the holy Magi—and by the light of that miraculous star we come to the stable of Bethlehem, where the young Virgin Mother is found, with her Divine Infant "wrapped in His swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." But St. Matthew only gives us time enough to offer our gold, frankincense, and myrrh, with the three wise men, and then leads us from Bethlehem "by another way," never to return to its Infant King. It is St. Luke who takes the Holy Infancy directly to his

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heart, who goes to Nazareth and listens to the wonderful message of the archangel, Gabriel, catches the light of his celestial smile as he utters the first "*Ave Maria*," the first "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," that ever gladdened the world; watches, as only the artist of the Holy Infancy could watch, the virginal hesitation that overshadowed, like the wing of a dove, the face of Mary when she heard the salutation of the angel, and "was troubled;" and then, the shadow lifted, sees the first streak of the dawn of Redemption breaking over her face, with that meek, yet most powerful consent—powerful, since without this consent we should have had no Nazareth and no Bethlehem—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according thy word;" and, that consent of Mary's free will having been given, without which God would not have come down to us, since He would not force Himself on His own creatures, it is our evangelist, poet, artist, and cantor, who stands in the solemn light of that mystical eclipse of the Eternal Word at the moment of His Incarnation, when the Dove of the Holy Spirit brooded over the Immaculate Virgin, and Mary held in her womb the "Word made flesh." It is St. Luke who goes with the Holy Virgin, in her happy haste, over the steep ways of the "hill country of Judea," with that step lighter than an angel's, yet far more careful than an angel's, since no angel could ever be a mother—goes with Mary over those stony paths to her cousin, St. Elizabeth, whose unborn babe, St. John Baptist, leaps

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in her womb for joy when he hears the voice of our Blessed Lady; it is St. Luke who hears the congratulation of the aged but joyful Elizabeth, chiming in with the angelical salutation like the second phrase of some strain of heavenly music, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb;" and then hears, with his memory inspired to repeat it for us, the sublime response of Mary, in her own anthem of the 'Magnificat,' in which Mary prophecies that "all nations shall call her blessed;" and by the solemn chanting of which the Church celebrates the exaltation of Mary as the Mother of God. It is St. Luke who gives us, after three months of joyful waiting, the 'Benedictus' of St. Zachary at the birth of John the Baptist, and, after this event, returns with Mary to that humble, but holy house, where St. Joseph lived chastely with his most chaste spouse, until the time came for that long, wintry journey to Bethlehem. It is St. Luke who travels, with faithful step, beside these meek spouses, these spotless guardians of the "Word made flesh," along the inhospitable streets of Bethlehem, every door closed upon them in their great straight; and, night coming on, takes, with them, shelter in that poor, but most blissful stable—contemptible in the eyes of men, but radiant and beauteous to the eye of faith and love—where Mary brings forth, not with sighs and tears like the daughters of Eve, but in an ecstacy of rapture, adoration, and thanksgiving, Jesus, the fruit of her womb. It is St. Luke whose dilated ear catches that one strain of the angel's

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song heard by mortals, "*Gloria in excelsis Deo; et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*," "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will," which the Church repeats in her solemn Office on all days but those of mourning, and it is St. Luke who brings the shepherds from their flocks on the frosty hillsides, out of the clear, cold starlight of the December night, into the tender brightness of that atmosphere radiating from and surrounding, the new-born "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." It is St. Luke who leads us to the beautiful courts of the temple, points out to us the holy Simeon and the devout Anna, and invites us to draw near when the aged Hebrew, taking the young Messias into his arms, breaks forth into that hymn of adoring satisfaction, "*Nunc dimittis*," "Now let thy servant, O Lord, depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It is St. Luke who returns once more to Nazareth with the Holy Family, and, after twelve years, gives us one more glimpse of the humble carpenter, St. Joseph, and of Mary, his virgin spouse, in company with "the boy, Jesus," going up to the Temple at Jerusalem; the cruel loss of Him during three days, and the joyful finding of Him, at length, in the Temple, where He sat with the doctors of the Jewish Sanhedrim, "both hearing them and asking them questions." It is in this way that St. Luke has garnered up, in his beautiful gospel, a rich legacy of pictures in words, and of songs without musical notes, for the artists, poets, musicians of all generations, to be used by them

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for the ever new delight of the young and the old, the joyful and the sorrowful. Well may St. Luke be called the evangelist, artist, poet, cantor of the Holy Infancy, of Bethlehem, and of Nazareth! The tender grace of the Holy Infancy, its gentleness and simplicity, have been stamped upon his writings, and it is in the company of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, that we are to look for St. Luke, until in later years—when the Rod of Jesse had not only budded, blossomed, but had borne its fruit, and the tree of the cross had been bathed all over with the Precious Blood—we find him beside the fervid apostle, St. Paul, as his constant companion, his steadfast friend, and his faithful biographer. It is with St. Paul, standing to him in all these beautiful relations, that we hear of St. Luke in the See of Peter, in the old city of Rome, that Eternal City of perfect beauty to the eye of faith, where the aged and worn pilgrim of the Holy Infancy, of Bethlehem, and Nazareth, can, to this day, lay down his palmer's staff, and don his scallop-shell, before the successor of the Fisherman, and the Vicegerent of the Babe of Bethlehem.

St. Luke is thus the evangelist, poet, artist and cantor of the Holy Infancy; but the artists have claimed him for their special patron, and this choice is founded on a tradition which the worldly-wise seek in vain to destroy.

The picture that accompanies this sketch of St. Luke, represents the evangelist painting Our Blessed Lady with her Divine Son in her arms, and this is no

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mere fancy of the great Italian artist, Raphael; for, "Theodorus Lector, who lived in 518, relates, that a picture of the Blessed Virgin, painted by St. Luke, was sent from Jerusalem to the Empress Pulcheria, who placed it in the church of Hodegorum, which she built in Constantinople. Moreover, a very ancient inscription was found in a vault near the church of St. Mary *in via lata* at Rome, in which it is said of a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, discovered there, that it is "One of the seven painted by St. Luke." Three or four such pictures are still in being; the principal one is that placed by Pope Paul V., in the Burghesian chapel in St. Mary Major at Rome." We have copied this account of St. Luke's pictures of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the Rev. Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints, a work written with most admirable regard to sober, well authenticated facts. It is not "an article of faith" that St. Luke painted the Blessed Virgin Mary, but we need not be ashamed to believe it on the word of witnesses so worthy of confidence. It is also an evidence in favor of this tradition, that a part of the relics of St. Luke the Evangelist, were kept at Mount Athos, in Greece; for we know that in this monastery there has existed an art school, without interruption, since the fifth century; and there can be no doubt that the veneration of the monks for St. Luke, and for the Madonnas painted by him, had a great deal to do with the style of art which they held to for ages, with almost superstitious obstinacy, but which the world has long since

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outgrown. But it was not at Mount Athos alone that St. Luke was venerated as the friend of artists. In Italy, so long ago as 1350, a confraternity of painters was formed and placed under the immediate protection of St. Luke. Their intention, in thus banding together, "was not to communicate to each other discoveries, or to advise with each other on new methods, but simply to offer up thanks and praises to God."

The pictures painted at that time were all Christian pictures. and the artist depicted to the eye what the priests of God endeavored to impress on the minds and hearts of men through the ear. Buffalmacco, one of the scholars of Giotto, and who died 1340, says; "We painters occupy ourselves entirely in tracing saints on the walls, and on the altars, in order that by this means, men, to the great despite of the demons, may be more drawn to virtue and piety." As M. Rio adds, after quoting these words, "Amid these pious pre-occupations the studio of the painter became an oratory."

It was by this spirit of ardent devotion that the painters of that, and of succeeding ages, were able to express in their pictures such a divine grandeur, such a supernatural majesty, with the most tender modesty, unaffected humility, and a rapturous enjoyment of celestial delights, as, to this day, have never been exceeded, indeed we must own, have not since been equalled. They lived nearer heaven than earth, and sought, not only to please men, but to offer up their works as hymns of praise and acts of adoration, to the

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majesty of God. The people, too, for whom these works were executed, had the same devout tastes. It was not, in those days of Christian simplicity, their own countenances that they desired to perpetuate, but the celestial countenances of Christ and of His Blessed Mother, of the saints and beloved friends of God. It was not so much the scenery and abodes of this perishable world that they wish to behold, as the scenery of heaven, the abode of the angels and saints, the true native land and eternal home of every child of God. Therefore it was, that the artists were so beloved by the people, and no artist was obliged to pander to perverted or wicked tastes, in order to gain praise, or to earn his bread. No artist, indeed, of any age of the world, is obliged to do this; but in these days the unhappy artist finds, very often, that his heavenly pictures are not the ones most praised, nor even his innocent ones; and he yields to the temptation to please men rather than God, and employs his pencil to adorn the haunts of pleasure rather than the house of prayer, until, debased by such unworthy labors, he brings to the adornment of the church and the altar, the unhallowed tastes and the bedizened splendors of a corrupt generation. If we would have pious painters we must have a pious generation for them to paint for. There are very few artists who do not begin with a holy sense of their high vocation, and who do not lose it with keen remorse and bitter loathing.

An artist who paints the Madonna and her Divine Son, so as to touch the hearts of men and win the

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praise of God, must paint, as we see St. Luke painting in this picture before us, on his knees; at least in the spirit of one whose dear privilege it is often to hold converse with his Heavenly Father and his celestial friends. It was thus that painting, and the pursuit of all art, became most noble in the eyes of the people of those days, and to devote a son to an artistic career was to devote him to God and the service of the altar. We read of painters who never began a work without practising special devotions, even retiring from the world for a season, and frequenting the sacraments as the sources of their inspiration. The altar and the sacraments are the same now as in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and one has only to live, as the old painters lived, in the spirit of faith and in the atmosphere of faith, to revive all the glories of that religious art which claimed St. Luke for its patron. How happy should I be, if, to the reading of these few pages about St. Luke, some boy or girl should date a resolve to use for God, and for His most holy service, any skill in the art of design that either may possess, or may hereafter acquire! Let not this child be discouraged, as if all the subjects of art were exhausted, as if the world were tired of Madonnas and of saints. The world is never tired of sincerely devout pictures; and though some people may try to prove that the pagan works of Raphael are more admirable than his religious ones, the heart of the world, long ago, decided that question. Raphael lives in the affections of his fellow men through

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his religious pictures; and so long as the heart of one Christian is stirred to devotion by his Virgins and Madonnas, so long will Raphael live as the favorite and delight of Christendom; and no longer; for although the critics might crown him with their garlands, they could never compel the world to love him, as it does now.

It is not, then, in Schools of Design, and Academies of Art, that the secret of the great religious picture is learned, but in some moment of devotion, some practice of piety, some habit, it may be, of devotion to the Mother of God, when the heart, the soul, the sense, kindled by love, eagerly portrays what it sees with the eye of faith, and longs for with all the ardor of devout aspiration. Study, if you would paint well, but pray far more; and the inspiration that flies from the mere student will come to the one that "waits on the Mother of wisdom and knocketh at the posts of her door."

It sometimes takes ages for the world to find out what it really likes best, to sift out the wheat from the chaff, separate the gold from the dross of base ores around it; but the decision is, at last, always on the side of virtue and of God. Even in ancient pagan art, the works most prized to day are those in which the soul of man recognizes some fragment of a divine idea; and the scorn of the Apollo Belvidere is not so much the scorn of the glorious youth for the dead "python," as the scorn of the immortal soul for the monster sin. So, in Christian art, the ages will

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winnow the wheat from the chaff, smelt the gold from the ore, and God and His truth will be justified, and the true artist will be crowned with an honor that will be a promise of the far greater honor awaiting him, at the last day, in the eyes of the assembled nations; for then, the smallest picture painted for the love of God, will be rewarded as faithfully, as the cup of water given to the thirsty traveler for Christ's sake.

But it is not as the patron of artists, alone, that St. Luke is venerated; he is also claimed as the patron of physicians; and this reminds me that I must give you the history of St. Luke as it has been handed down from age to age. When we see into how short a space the life of such a man as St. Luke, is crowded in the libraries of a world which he served with such singular zeal, such purity of motive, and with so many accomplishments to grace his career, we sigh that so little has been written of him, so little preserved. But it is not the number of pages written, so much as the noble and supernatural acts and graces recorded, that make a rich biography; and we also know that the life of St. Luke was offered as a holocaust, a *whole* burnt offering to God. It is when we forget ourselves, have no desire to leave after us what will make us distinguished, that God remembers us, that the Church remembers us, and writes upon tablets, more enduring than tablets of fine brass, the acts of those whose ambition has been all for her.

St. Luke was born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, a city noted for its delightful situation, the riches

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of its traffic, its vast extent, and the number of its inhabitants, and also for their politeness of manners, learning, and wisdom. In her schools, the most renowned in all Asia, St. Luke acquired an education, at once solid and brilliant, and this he improved still further by his travels in Greece and Egypt. St. Jerome says that St. Luke was more skilled in Greek than in Hebrew, and his style is one of uncommon elegance. He was converted to Christianity after the ascension of Our Lord, but by whose preaching is uncertain. He does not claim to have written his gospel as an eye-witness, like St. John, to the events in the life of Our Lord, but from the narratives of those "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." There can be no doubt that St. Luke received from the lips of the Blessed Virgin herself, the account of the Annunciation, of the Incarnation, and of the visit of the Blessed Virgin to St. Elizabeth, which are related only in his gospel; and this probability adds another charm to his beautiful narrative, which is worthy of having been dictated by the Virgin Mother. The parable of the Prodigal Son, is found only in St. Luke's gospel, and it would seem as if St. Luke had a predilection for every circumstance that could set forth the tender compassion of the Redeemer for poor, unhappy sinners.

St. Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles, a sacred history compiled at Rome by Divine inspiration, as an appendix to his gospel, to prevent any false accounts of the great events which he had related, and

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also to leave an authentic record of the manner in which God planted His infant Church, and replenished it with all needful graces. In the first twelve chapters he relates the actions of the principal apostles after the ascension of Our Lord, especially of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, including that wonderful description of the conversion of St. Paul which can never be read without a thrill of awe and a throb of thanksgiving. From the thirteenth chapter, however, he speaks of little besides the history of St. Paul, his preaching and his miracles, which he heard and saw for himself, and could therefore correct the false reports that had been given of them. It is in his account of the voyage of St. Paul from Troas to Macedon, after St. Barnabas left him, that St. Luke first speaks of himself as the companion of St. Paul; and although before that time he had been his devoted disciple, he appears never afterwards to have left him, unless to fulfill his commissions. He shared the toils, dangers, and sufferings, of the great "Apostle to the Gentiles." St. Paul calls him, his "fellow laborer," and, "Luke, the beloved physician." St. Jerome tells us that St. Luke was eminent in his profession, and from the testimony of St. Paul it appears that he did not lay aside its practice while performing the labors of a missionary and an apostle. We can readily understand how he may have used his healing art on his long and varied journeys; for, after the priestly office, there is no profession that so commends itself to the heart of the humane as that of the Chris-

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tian physician. How often is he the only one present to assist the dying to make those acts of faith, of hope, and of charity, so necessary at the last awful moment, and to raise their sinking courage under the pains of their mortal agony! How often, also, may not the prayers of the pious and believing physician do more than all human remedies, by inspiring in the mind of the sick person a calm faith in God's power and goodness, that puts even the body into a state of repose, and allows the medicine to do its work. How often, alas! is the sacrament of baptism lost to the newborn infant, because no one sees the danger of the little one, but the physician, who may despise this sacrament of regeneration; or, on the contrary, how often does the Christian physician pour the saving waters of baptism on the head of the dying babe, when others are forgetful of its rights as a child of God! Well may we rejoice in this powerful patron of physicians, and heartily should we pray that they may never act otherwise, in the practice of their noble profession, than St. Luke would have done while in full possession of his sacred office as an evangelist, and a teacher of the truth of God.

St. Luke attended St. Paul when he was sent to Rome as a prisoner, from Jerusalem, in the year 61; and had the happiness of seeing him set at liberty in 63, the year in which he finished writing his Acts of the Apostles. He continued with St. Paul after his release, and the great apostle, during his last imprison-

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ment, writes that his other friends had all left him, only Luke was with him.

From these circumstances, we may conclude that the gentle and refined nature of St. Luke was capable of the most faithful friendship, a capacity far less common than is supposed. It is not every one who knows how to be a friend; it seems, indeed, to be a special grace, reserved for some, and withheld from others who may be very good people, but the sacred quality of friendship is beyond their grasp. We must not, then, complain if those who seem to be our friends do not show an heroic friendship towards us when their own interests stand between them and us, or when our misfortunes may try all but those supernaturally devoted to us. Let us be ready to overlook any such imperfections in others, while, for ourselves, we try to live out that golden rule of love to our neighbor, which is the secret of that true and noble friendship manifested for St. Paul by St. Luke, increased as it must have been, in this instance, by his veneration for the "Apostle and doctor of the Gentiles."

After the martyrdom of St. Paul, St. Luke is said to have preached in Italy, Gaul, Dalmatia and Macedon. Some say that he traveled into Egypt, and preached in Thebais. St. Hippolitus says that St. Luke was crucified in Peloponnesus, near Achaia, in Greece, and the modern Greeks tell us that he was crucified on an olive tree. His relics were distributed among many churches, and St. Gregory is said to have brought the

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head of St. Luke from Constantinople to Rome, and to have deposited it in the church of his monastery of St. Andrew. The ancient picture of St. Luke, together with all the instruments formerly used in writing, is copied from old manuscript books of his gospel. As I have said, some of his relics are kept in the great Grecian monastery on Mount Athos.

The pictures of St. Luke in his character of evangelist, represent him with his gospel in his hand, and beside him the ox, with or without wings; and by this mark he may always be known from the other evangelists. There are four round pictures, called "Lunettes," in the cathedral at Parma, Italy, painted by Correggio, representing the Four Evangelists, as if seated, St. John on the eagle, St. Mark on the winged lion, St. Luke on the winged ox, while St. Matthew is borne up on clouds supported by a youth. There is a noble inspiration about these figures, as we have seen them copied in large photographs suitable for framing, and the recollection of these sublime personages, as given by the Christian painter, might well prove a shield against many a shaft of unbelief aimed at the Four Gospels.

The symbols in these lunettes, and in all pictures of the evangelists, are taken from the first chapter in Ezekiel, in which the prophet describes the "Four living creatures," in a way that applies to the Four Evangelists; and we find them distinguished from each other by these symbols in the earliest Christian pictures, whether in the Greek and Latin mosaics, or

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on the stained glass of Gothic windows, or on the rich vellum pages of the illuminated missals in the ancient monasteries; and even on the delicately carved wood, and ivory, and engraved precious metals, that beautify the covers of those venerated copies of the gospels used on the great festival days, in many an abbey church or grand cathedral, amid the flare of the tall wax candles held by the acolytes, and the fuming of the incense from the censors; and held then, as now, in a manner so picturesque, that few groups during the Holy Sacrifice of the mass, as it is solemnly celebrated on great feasts, are so strikingly beautiful as the one called together at the singing of the gospel by the deacon. I remember seeing, for the first time, this grouping at the chanting of the gospel. The book was solemnly taken from the altar by the deacon, who kneeled for the blessing of the celebrating priest; and well do I remember the recollected air of that youthful deacon, worthy of a St. Stephen or a St. Laurence, as he moved with the sub-deacon and the acolytes, with the lights and the incense, to the gospel side of the sanctuary, and there adjusted the book so that it would be held by the hands of the sub-deacon, and rest against his forehead. When he had signed the book and himself, most solemnly, three times, he gave forth, in the clear tones of the old Gregorian Chant, the gospel of the day, after which the book was taken to the celebrating priest, who devoutly kissed the gospel just sung, saying, "By the words of this gospel may all our sins be blotted out."

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And well do I remember how there flashed across my mind, this thought: could the Church, thus venerating the gospels, ever have been guilty of cutting off the people of God from these sacred fountains? "It must be a calumny," I said to myself, and whenever this calumny was repeated in my presence, that solemn group, so full of artistic as well as of religious beauty, rose up to my mind as a testimony against the slander. To this day, the most moving instances on record of a sincere and affectionate reverence for the Four Gospels, are to be found among the scholars and monks of that Church, which so many, honestly, suppose, has made it a sealed book to her children; whereas, it is one of the glories of the Catholic Church, that not only were the writers of the Four Gospels and of the New Testament among her most honored founders, but that the preservation of their inspired writings has been the object of her unceasing care, has furnished the motive for her most profound learning, and has inspired some of her most sublime works of art.

In this generation, when so many pens and tongues are directed against the authority of the Holy Gospels, let us address not only St. Luke, but, in the well known invocation of the Litany of the Saints, cry out,

"O all ye holy Evangelists, pray for us!"

Especially let us do so on the 18th of October, the day on which the Church claims for St. Luke, the veneration, honor, and devotion of entire Christendom.

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SAINT CECILIA.

ONE Sunday morning, as we were leaving the church of the Holy Name, we saw that our pastor had a surprise for his congregation. The organ had been put very quietly into a new case, as appropriate as beautiful; for, above all the architectural forms and ornamentation rose the cross, and, on either side, in the shadow of the grand arches, with here and there a fleck of colored light from the stained glass of the windows on their draperies, were two statues, carved in wood, and of very nearly life size.

One of the statues represented David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, who not only wrote those inspired hymns, called "The Psalms," but sang them to the music of his harp. There he stood, with his noble and regal countenance turned to heaven, from whence he derived the spirit of his divine melodies, while his fingers touched the strings of his sacred instrument. On the other side of the cross stood a majestic figure,

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her face, also, turned upward, and irradiated with that light of joy and love which heaven alone can give to human or angelic forms, and in her hands were the organ pipes, which she is said to have invented at the suggestion of an angel. Could any subjects have been chosen more likely to inspire those who were to make the responses to the celebrating priest, to do so according to the intention of the Holy Sacrifice of the mass; or, more fitted to remind them of the noble obligations resting on those whose vocation it is to sing, not in the presence of any earthly dignitaries, however great, not to gain their applause and patronage, but, to sing in His presence who sits between the cherubim in glory, and, also, in a hidden, yet most perfect, manner, upon our altars—to sing in His presence, and, as an act of worship, such canticles, and such notes, as are a fitting response to the eternal alleluias of Heaven?

What sensible devotion, what adoration, may not be raised by the music of a religious choir! The music of the Church has, always, been regarded as one of those aids to devotion which no priest will allow to decline from its sacred intention of praising God. St. Gregory the Great, a pope who lived in such stirring times that one would think he might have been excused from paying any particular attention to music, nevertheless, expressed the mind of the Church in this matter, by working a perfect reformation in the sacred music of his age; a reformation, which succeeding generations, so far from outgrowing, or despising, can never enough admire.

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To this day, the, so called, Gregorian chants, are those which the Church selects for her greatest feasts; and during Holy week she confines herself to their grand and impressive strains. Later compositions, even of the most religious character, are laid aside, and the language of the mournful Office of the Tenebræ, all that is sung on Good Friday and on Holy Saturday, is set to these majestic measures. In vain will any human genius hope to improve such musical phrases as the priestly, "*Ave sanctum Oleum*," of Holy Thursday; the refrain "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem*," of the Tenebræ; the "*Respondit Jesus*," of Good Friday; or that hymn of divine joy, issuing from the shadows of the grave, the "*Exultet*," of Holy Saturday! The heart of Christendom has, for centuries, found her faith, her hope, her love, her sorrow and her joy, expressed by these holy cadences; and these centuries have not only consecrated them to the ear of the Church, but have proved their perfection.

But I have not told you, dear children, who is represented by the second statue; the one, I mean, with the organ pipes in her hand. Some of you may have guessed, already, from having seen pictures of this patroness of sacred music, or from hearing of some musical festival in her honor; for it is no less a person than the St. Cecilia of the third century of the Christian era, that noble Roman lady, who knew how to consecrate her genius to God, and to honor Him with His own celestial gifts.

There is no history of the early saints more authen-

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tic than that of St. Cecilia, who is honored as a virgin and martyr, and whose name adorns, not only the Litany of the Saints, but the holy Canon of the Mass. Although sketches of her life are found in every work giving a poetical history of music, yet it has never suffered, like so many others, from the gross misrepresentations of unbelief, and she stands forth, in the simplicity of Christian heroism, untainted by any surroundings, secular, or even profane; and many, who would smile at the idea of asking her aid in their musical compositions or performances, still claim her as their gentle patroness, and honor her by producing their noblest strains to grace her festival.

St. Cecilia was born about the year 214. Her parents were of noble Roman families, and their house was built upon the famous Campus Martius, an immense tract of ground set aside for the military exercises of the imperial army. By degrees, temples, and public edifices, and the houses of the nobles, were allowed to be built there, and, among others, the palace of the family of Cecilia. Here, surrounded by all the splendor of the Roman nobility, and by the crowns and trophies of her ancestors, this beautiful young girl, despising the pomps and vanities of the heathen society to which she belonged, practiced, with perfect fidelity, the maxims of Christianity.

We often hear persons excuse themselves for any carelessness in the practice of their duties, because it is, they say, "so hard to act differently from the world around us." Let such persons blush at the example

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set by this young girl; and let any one, who is placed in circumstances somewhat like Cecilia, take courage, remembering her fidelity among pagans.

It is not certain whether the little Cecilia learned Christianity from her parents, who might have been obliged to practice their religion in secret, or, from her nurse. The circumstances of her marriage make it probable that her parents were pagans, but, however this may have been, there were dangers, she knew, in store for her as a Christian, and she devoted herself to her religion as those do who are preparing to suffer for it. She carried, night and day, a copy of the gospels hidden in the folds of her robe. She also made a secret, but solemn, vow to her Divine Spouse, and, in the spirit of this promise, shunned the pleasures and vanities of the world. She excelled in music; and this charming gift she consecrated to God by composing hymns in His honor, which she sang with such ravishing sweetness that the very angels are said to have descended from heaven to listen to her, and also to join their voices with hers. She played, skillfully, upon all the instruments used in those luxurious days of Roman civilization; but through none of them was she able to express the sublime harmonies that flooded her soul, and she was inspired to invent the organ, thereby to worship God through the sweetness of terrestrial sounds. To this day, the organ is used only for sacred music, so perfectly do we see the intention of its saintly author carried out.

When Cecilia was sixteen, her parents married her

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to a young Roman noble, who possessed uncommon natural goodness; but he was still in the darkness of paganism. No doubt, God, who saw that his ignorance of Christianity alone prevented his belief in its saving truths, moved Cecilia's father and mother to act as they did in this matter. Cecilia obeyed her parents, accepting the husband thus chosen for her; but beneath her white bridal robe, she wore the hair skirt of the penitent, praying, as she walked to the altar, that she might receive help from above to persevere in her solemn vow of virginity.

Her mortifications, her prayers, her acts of filial obedience were not in vain; for she not only persuaded her husband, Valerian, to respect her promise, but converted him to the true faith.

How wonderful are the graces that come to the assistance of those who put their whole trust in God! How wonderful, yet how silent! yet not more wonderful nor more silent, than the souls, who, leaving to God the manner of their deliverance, are satisfied to offer themselves as victims to His adorable will.

When the festivities of the marriage day were over, and Cecilia was left alone with her husband, she told him of the solemn promise she had made to preserve her virginity, and of the glorious angel who was ever at her side to protect her in this promise, asking him to respect what had been dedicated to God. Valerian wished to see this angel, visible only to her. She told him that he must be instructed in her religion, before he could have this privilege; and when she saw him

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so mild and so candid, so ready to hear, so ready to believe all that she said to him, she knew that God had heard her prayers, and had, by His divine grace, prepared the mind of her young husband to be a Christian, like herself, and to respect her vow, and she sent him to the good Pope, Urban, for instruction. The instructions of the holy old man were not lost on the willing mind of Valerian, and before he left him he was baptized by St. Urban. He returned to his wife in the white garments of his baptismal innocence, and, as he entered her room, heard the most enchanting music and saw the angel standing near her, in his hand two crowns of lilies and roses, gathered in Paradise, and immortal in their freshness and perfume, with which he crowned these two young spouses, so chaste in their mutual affection.

Valerian had a brother, dearly beloved by him. It was in answer to the wish he expressed to the angel for the conversion of his brother, that Tiburtius, when he came to their house, was allowed to perceive the fragrance of these celestial flowers; and not only were his bodily senses quickened, but his mind was prepared to see the truth of the Christian doctrine, as explained to him by the seraphic Cecilia; and he, also, hastened to St. Urban to be baptized.

Happy haste, holy fervor, most prudent impatience of these elected ones! Celestial ardor, which flew along the path of perfection, and seized, as its natural food, what could alone satisfy the hunger of an immortal child of God! The happy trio now went about

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doing all sorts of good works, giving alms of their great riches, encouraging those who were to suffer for Christ, and burying, honorably, those who were put to death for his sake. The Roman prefect, seeing this joyful exercise of charity, sent for the young nobles, Valerian, and Tiburtius, and commanded them to cease these works of faith and love; but they made this sublime answer: "How can we cease from this which is our duty, for anything that man can do to us?" The two brothers, gave the most courageous answers to all the questions of the prefect, Almachius, and at last, Tiburtius, having been first scourged, they were led to prison, and put under the care of the centurion, Maximus. By the eloquence of their piety and their chains, they converted Maximus, so that when they were called upon to offer a libation to Jupiter, he, also, had the grace to refuse, and to follow them in their holy death.

Cecilia herself, was afterwards brought before the cruel Almachius, and commanded to sacrifice to the idols of Rome. But one who had overcome the temptations of a heart most tender in its affections, choosing to preserve for God what He had created to love, serve and enjoy Him forever, could not hesitate to refuse this grossly impious request, and she was condemned to suffer death in a dry bath, or a closed bath with fire under it. This cruel sentence was immediately carried out in her own magnificent house, to which she had been taken, only a few months before, as the bride of one of the flowers of the

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Roman nobility. Yet the fearful heat seemed only to refresh the celestial maiden, and an executioner was sent to dispatch her with the sword; but, although he made three attempts with his keen blade, he could not sever her head from her body. The Roman law forbade a fourth trial, and she was suffered to linger in this state for three days, using them to encourage the Christians who came to see her, until, at the end of that time, God released her pure and heroic soul from the prison of her mortal body, it being the 22nd of November, 230.

The feast of SS. Valerian and Tiburtius and of St. Maximus, is celebrated on the 14th of April, that of St. Cecilia on the 22d of November, and on her feast day, in the church of St. Cecilia-in-Trastevere, (or beyond the Tiber), one hears all the noblest choirs of the Eternal City uniting their canticles to those of the angels and of St. Cecilia.

A church called St. Cecilia de Domo was built, very early, on the ground formerly occupied by the palace in which St. Cecilia was born. This church was rebuilt in the last century by Pope Benedict XIII., and an ancient inscription was taken from the old church to the new, "*This is the house where Saint Cecilia prayed.*" The house where she resided with her husband, and where she met her death, was, at her request, consecrated by St. Urban as a church, the chamber in which she suffered being regarded as a spot of peculiar sanctity. Pope Symmachus held a council in the church of St. Cecilia in the year 500.

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Falling into ruins, it was rebuilt by Pope Paschal I., in the ninth century, and, while he was engaged in this pious work, the saint appeared to him in a dream, discovering to him the place of her burial. Searching for her body as she instructed him to do, he found it in the Cemetery of St. Calixtus, clothed in the rich robe of silk, and gold tissue, which she had worn at her martyrdom, and at her feet a linen cloth dipped in her blood. It was then removed, with the bodies of SS. Valerian and Tiburtius and St. Maximus, to her church of "*St. Cecilia-in-Trastevere.*"

In 1599 this church was again repaired, and richly embellished by the order of Clement VIII. The body of St. Cecilia was taken from its vault and examined in the presence of the assembled dignitaries of the Church, among whom was Cardinal Baronius, who has given us a description of its appearance. "She was lying within a coffin of cypress-wood, enclosed in a marble sarcophagus, not in the manner of one dead and buried, that is, on her back, but on her right side, as one asleep; in a very modest attitude, covered with a simple stuff of taffety, having her head bound with cloth, and at her feet the remains of the cloth of gold and silk, which Pope Paschal had found in her tomb." Clement VIII. ordered that the relics should not be touched, and the cypress coffin was enclosed in a silver shrine. Stefano Maderno, a sculptor, was then in the employment of the cardinal who presided on this occasion, and he modelled, and afterward executed in marble, by the order of the cardinal, the celebrated

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statue of "St. Cecilia lying dead," which has been called one of the most perfect in modern times.

Every one who goes to Rome visits this church of St. Cecilia, and obtains a photograph, at least, of this statue, that will tell, so long as marble endures, the story of the miraculous preservation of the body of the saint. Nothing can exceed the grace and tenderness of this figure, as it comes to us, in America, in books upon art, in small *terra cotta* copies, and in photographs. Though we do not see the face of the Roman maiden, the chastely disposed limbs, the hands softly locked, the neck, turned without violence, but, still, so as to show the triple martyrdom of the sword —the whole attitude of the virgin and martyr, appeals to the most insensible heart. "It lies as no living body could lie, and yet correctly, as the dead when left to expire."

Happy martyr! Glorious saint! The horrors of that prolonged trial, by which the tenderness of the girl was changed to more than womanly heroism, are still commemorated in the remains of the room in which she suffered; and those who fancy, in the cowardice of their self-love, that the gifted, and the gently reared, should be excused from suffering, as too sensitive to bear the cross of the Christian, may well pause before this statue of Cecilia in the sweet sleep of martyrdom. The world may boast of her singing men and singing women; the songsters of the opera and the ballad; but the world's inmost heart pays the tribute of its admiration, of its love, and of its sympathy, at

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the shrine of Cecilia, the Roman virgin and martyr, who knew how to turn from the smiles of time, and the delusions of sense, to plunge into the flood of glory streaming down from the Eternal; and, losing her finite self, to find, forever, the living, infinite God.

St. Cecilia inspired one of Raphael's most sublime pictures. In this, she stands robed in the rich garments of a Roman patrician, surrounded by saints, the organ pipes in her hands and musical instruments on the ground at her feet, with her virginal face turned in an ecstacy to heaven, where one sees a choir of angels, singing; and their song seems to have inspired her to reproduce, on earth, their harmonious worship. Carlo Dolce, also, painted a picture of St. Cecilia seated in a dim organ loft, a look of holy recollection on her face, the rich stuffs in which she is dressed showing the nobility of her rank, the lily blooming at her side expressing her voluntary virginity; while the beautiful hands touch the keys with a grace so full of worship that we can almost hear the "*Sanctus, Sanctus*," of the angelic hosts, which we feel sure must surround her.

We might mention pictures of St. Cecilia by so early an artist as Cimabue, so accomplished an one as Domenichino, and so pious an one as Lucas von Leyden; but we will pass over these to one of our own day and generation, painted by Ary Scheffer. In this St. Cecilia is sitting in a Roman chair, and, two angels, kneeling, present to her the organ-pipes. It is a very lovely picture, and shows that the artists of to-day have not forgotten her.

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The most eminent of all the composers of sacred music in modern times, is Palestrina, so called, because he was born in a town of that name near Rome. It is to Palestrina that we owe the pleasure of hearing the choir in church; for, in his time, musical composers had so far forgotten the end of church music, that the Pope and cardinals resolved to banish choirs, unless some one should compose a mass expressing the divine end of sacred melody. Palestrina was the chapel-master, or leader of the music, of the church of St. John Lateran, that cathedral of the whole world, as the inscription over its ancient portal declares, and whose canons, or ecclesiastics, take the place of honor before those of St. Peter's itself; and it was Palestrina who was honored by this august commission from the Father of the faithful. He wrote three masses, each to be sung by six voices. The two first were highly approved, but the third was heard with the most enthusiastic admiration for the grandeur of its devotion, and the purity of its harmonies. It was the triumph of religion in the world of music; and God and the Church again claimed music for the handmaid of piety and the nurse of devotion.

Palestrina lived to see several popes in the chair of St. Peter at Rome; but every one of these popes was his friend, and encouraged him to continue writing such masses as those which decided the Pope and cardinals to allow music to form a part of the worship in the Pontifical Chapel, and in all churches, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman. When he found his end

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approaching, he called to him his son, and said to him in these words, worthy of so true an artist, "My son, I leave to you a great number of unpublished works; thanks to the Abbé de Baume, to the Cardinal Aldobrandini, and to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, I also leave to you what is necessary to get them printed; I charge you to do this for the glory of God and for the honorable celebration of the worship in His temples."

In the Music Hall in Boston is a bust of Palestrina, giving us a face, grave, religious, and exalted in its expression. The bust stands on a bracket, and the shelf of this bracket is supported by a figure of St. Cecilia attended by angels. She holds a book of music on her hands, to which one angel points while he looks at St. Cecilia as if instructing her; and the hands of the other angel, joined in worship, express the sacredness of their musical studies. Back of this group, which seems to be floating down from heaven with its calm brightness on their heads, crowd numbers of angelic faces, the far off hosts of heaven lying under the deep shadow of the bracket like soft summer clouds. Nothing could be imagined more lovely in its effect. The whole is a tribute of this present age to the grandeur of religious music, to the genius and piety of Palestrina, and, to that Virgin Martyr, who is still one of the glories of the Church of the Catacombs, St. Cecilia of Rome.

On my table lies a book giving a curious and interesting account of the musical celebrations, held in

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England in honor of St. Cecilia, during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. To this is added a collection of the Odes written in her praise, and, among the Catholic poets who have thus consecrated their muse, are Alexander Pope and John Dryden.

I have taken pains to speak of these facts to show you how attractive, even to the eyes of the worldly, may become, in the course of ages, those who have been willing to forget the world, to do without its approbation, and have been contented to please God. In the exquisite language of King Solomon, in his *Book of Wisdom*, which the Church uses in her lesson for the feasts of her martyrs, "We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints."

Little child, youth, maiden, if God has given you a sweet voice with which to sing His praise, can you stand in sight of St. Cecilia, as she seems to have alighted, for a moment, on the fair organ case which I have described to you, and grudge that voice when the decorum of the church service may need its aid; or, can you sacrifice to the idle song, much less the enticing one, the gift that won, for St. Cecilia, some of the fairest of the lilies and roses in her virgin's crown? Hang over your piano-forte, over your harp, over your music stand, some print of St. Cecilia, be it ever so small, and she will help you to consecrate to God one of the most endearing of His gifts.

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SAINT STANISLAUS.

YOU may know Catholic families who have a habit of "Drawing a saint," for each member, and; perhaps, for some dear friend outside their own little circle, every month in the year. It is in the same spirit, and with a similar intention, that I have selected the saints for our book; for I wish you to look upon the saints as your friends, and as we all have one or two friends who are especially dear to us, and to whom we go when we need any help or consolation, so I wish you to have special friends among the saints, *intimate* friends, if you please, whom you will not hesitate to ask to pray for you, and to whom you will turn in all your little difficulties. This is, really, what is meant by a *Patron Saint*. When you were baptized, your good parents chose a name for you, perhaps two or three names, and, all of them names of saints. They chose these names to secure for you so many holy patrons, or friends, in heaven; friends who would feel themselves bound to look after your interests, and who will re-

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joice to do so, so long as you show a proper regard for them. Besides these patrons, secured for you at your baptism, every one of you has an opportunity, at your confirmation, to take a patron of your own choosing, and you can also bear, his, or her, name. Still more; as you grow older, and feel a particular affection for some saint, you can express this affection by asking him, or her, to be one of your patrons. It is in the way I have mentioned last, that cities, and nations, have their Patron Saints, who are always particularly honored by these cities and nations, their pictures and statues being seen everywhere, and churches being named for them. This choice is always founded upon some particular affection for these saints, and this affection has grown out of the favors which these saints have obtained for them in times of distress, or, from some visible manifestation of good will during the history of these cities and nations. St. Patrick is thus the Patron Saint of Ireland, St. Andrew of Scotland, St. George of England, St. Louis of France, St. Boniface of Germany; and the Blessed Virgin Mary, under her title, *Conceived without sin*, is the Patroness of the United States. If you have seen pictures of Venice, you may have noticed the *winged lion*, figuring every where; on the top of one of the beautiful pillars near her Ducal-palace, on her churches, and worked into all their decorations. This winged lion is the symbol of St. Mark, Evangelist, the Patron Saint of the city of Venice, and his symbol finds an honored place, even where the statue of St. Mark

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could not, with propriety, be put. The protection of St. Mark is relied upon by all the Venetians, and noble pictures have been painted, commemorating his interference in their behalf.

Besides these examples of patrons, honored from age to age, through all the existence of great and powerful nations, and by individuals, like yourselves, from their baptism to their death, there are, as I have said, other patrons, whom we choose as we do our associates in study or in work, for the time being; or like persons whom we meet on our travels, and, for a month, are almost constantly beside us, adding to our enjoyment and doing us a great many favors. It is in this way, precisely, that the saint drawn every month, or the saints whose feasts gladden the several months of the year, do us so much good. They give us variety, and are to the soul what society is to the mind; and I dwell upon this, because I wish you to realize how near the saints are to you; how easy it is to get acquainted with them; how familiar may be your intercourse with them.

We will, then, look over the Calendar for November, and see whom we are to have for a friend during this month. As I look over it, my eye falls upon a very, very dear name. The 14th of November, how pleasant a feast is that of its youthful confessor! I will not tell you his name, however, until I have told you of a small picture, not, this time, in the black portfolio, but for many a year nestled in my Roman Missal. The picture is not larger than your Angel

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Guardian medal, but it has a flowery border in the shape of a vase. It was given to me—let me think—fifteen years ago, by a pious, lovely boy, now a student in the American College, at Rome, preparing to be a priest. The little picture was a favorite with him. It cost him, I know, many a pang to give it to me, but when he found how lovely it was in my eyes, how its loveliness was enhanced by my devotion to the saint, he insisted upon my taking it. It has often come near destruction, for the border is very frail, and careless people sometimes take up and lay down the book; but I have glued bits of tissue paper under the broken parts, and it still remains one of the chosen few allowed in my missal. I believe the picture had something to do with the vocation of my young friend; certainly, his devotion to this saint had very much to do with it, for the saint is no other than St. Stanislaus Kostka, our saint for the 14th of November, the lovely boy-saint, who has been the favorite of painters and poets, the darling model and beloved patron of many an innocent school-boy. Happy will be those of my young readers who take St. Stanislaus Kostka for their model.

We have had so many ancient saints that it may be pleasant to you—may seem a little more possible for you to be like him—if you know that St. Stanislaus was not only a boy in years, but that he lived no longer than three hundred years ago; more than a thousand years after some of the saints whose lives you have been reading. He was born in the castle of

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Rostkou, on the 28th of October, 1550, of one of the most ancient and most illustrious families in Poland. Both his father and his mother added to the nobility of their position the crowning glory of a devoted attachment to the Catholic faith. The infant Stanislaus gave an example, not only of early piety, but, of angelic innocence. His face was radiant with a more than infantine beauty, and the sweetness, truthfulness, and peacefulness of his disposition, were such as no parent could too much admire. In his tender piety, and habitual love of retirement, he was often seen on his young knees, his small hands clasped, and his eyes raised to Heaven, invoking the sweet names of Jesus and Mary. He was, indeed, a child in whom Jesus and Mary could delight, and on whom they could bestow their choicest favors.

When the time came for him to study he was sent to a school in Vienna, conducted by the Society of Jesus. Here he gave an example, not only as a diligent pupil, but as a follower of the Lamb of God, since no insult, no injury, could move him to revenge. The teasing, even the cruel, and wanton, treatment of his brother Paul, and his companions, who, sharing his room, were impatient at his piety, never ruffled the angelic sweetness of his amiable soul. At Vienna he fell very ill; and as the boys had lodgings, not with the Fathers, but with a Lutheran gentleman, Stanislaus was in danger of dying without the sacraments.

Behold! dear children, and imitate, the anxiety of this holy youth for his salvation. Seeing his own

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danger, he prayed fervently to the martyr, St. Barbara (who has often been known to assist those in danger of dying without the aid of the Blessed Sacrament), and, immediately St. Barbara appeared, attended by two angels, who communicated to the languishing boy, far from parents and friends, the adorable Body of his Lord and Saviour. Scarcely had St. Barbara vanished, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, bearing in her arms her Divine Son as a most lovely infant, whom she laid into the arms of our Stanislaus; thus prolonging, and as it were beatifying, the communion he had made by the hands of St. Barbara and the angels. It is this lovely scene, the Divine Infant in the arms of Stanislaus, who is almost swooning with happiness, which is represented by the little picture in my missal. Could you help loving such a picture?

These great favors, my dear children, were the blissful rewards of the daily virtues practiced by Stanislaus. He was most diligent in prayer, rising even at night to recite the praises of God, or to shed tears of contrition for his imperfections; he bore harassing contradictions and ridicule with heroic patience, and from his earliest years guarded his mind from every temptation against the virtue of purity. No indelicate word or jest ever came from the lips of Stanislaus; no unguarded moment betrayed the secrets of a heart careless of its thoughts, of its eyes and of its ears. The candid mind of St. Stanislaus was like a clear lakelet, such as one finds in some sheltered glen, where

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the stream leaps from rock to rock, falling into tiny basins in which one sees every pebble, and vein of rock, through the same water that reflects the blue of summer skies.

It was while he was at Vienna that our young saint was called by God to the mysterious, and holy joys of a religious life. He left Vienna secretly, to escape the obstacles which his high birth would put between him and the dear wish of his heart. Clad in the coarse garment of a pilgrim, a cord for his girdle, with only his rosary and a staff, he set out for Rome—to travel 1200 miles, bare-footed, solitary and unknown, there to put on the humble garb of a novice in the Society of Jesus, and to perform all those menial services by which the proudest hearts are won from their dainty love of themselves, and are taught the humility of the saints and the sanctity of labor. Here we see no proud, ambitious boy, impatient of a rival, envious of the success of a companion, but a holy youth sighing only for neglect and hardship.

Dear little reader, are you poor, are you compelled to labor every day with your small hands, perhaps to sweep the streets, or to knock at the back gates of grand houses for the dry crusts, and are you shabbily clothed because you are too poor to be dressed otherwise? Remember the holy Stanislaus, a novice in the Society of Jesus, courting the most humiliating labors, and the most uncomfortable clothes, that his superiors would allow him, and try to love that state of poverty

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which has been embraced, voluntarily, by so many saints.

Or, my little reader, are you rich, do you eat dainty food from exquisite dishes of the most elegant forms and painted by skillful artists; do you wear fashionabe clothing; more than this, do you judge of your companions by their dress, or by the street and house they live in, more than by their conduct? If so, my unfortunate rich child, remember, with shame, the noblyborn Stanislaus, who was of too lofty a soul to prize any such trifles. Like him, ask God for a mind capable of loving better things, and for a spirit of heroic self-denial, with that grace of holy purity which is always in danger amid luxury.

Claudio Aquaviva, the famous general of the Society, often mentioned, with tears, a circumstance which occurred while they were both in the novitiate, and which will show you the sort of obedience practiced by the saints. "We were one day," said the general, "appointed to help in the kitchen; the cook ordered us to bring some wood, and told us how many sticks each of us was to carry. I believed that I could carry more, and said so to Stanislaus; but he answered, smiling, 'No, you remember we must now obey the cook;' and he would carry exactly the number of sticks that he had been told to carry—no more and no less."

Stanislaus had not been quite ten months in the novitiate, when he received a forewarning of his death. To how many of you would not this be a cause of grievous lamentation, and of prayer to God

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to avert your unhappy fate? Our angelic young saint poured forth his soul in petitions—but, for what? To be allowed to celebrate the feast of Our Lady's Assumption in heaven, and, so earnestly did he ask for this favor, that she gave him a promise on the 10th of August, the feast of St. Laurence, who was his saint for the month, that his wish should be gratified. On that very day he was seized with a slight fever which his superior thought should put him in bed. Hearing this, he made over it the sign of the cross and said, aloud; "O can I any longer doubt that my wishes have been heard in heaven; never shall I rise from here!" His thoughts dwelt, unceasingly, upon the approaching solemnity of the Assumption, of which he spoke with exceeding tenderness. Still his sickness continued to be very slight until the 14th, when at midnight he swooned, and the assistant called out, "He has spoken too truly; we shall lose him."

Stanislaus, who had led a life of miraculous innocence, had no other thought than to die like a penitent, and he asked to receive the last sacraments prostrate upon the ground. He thanked his superiors for all their kindness to him, begging pardon for any ill example that he might have given. From this time he spoke only with God. Kissing, often, an image of the Blessed Virgin that he held in his hand, and keeping his beads twined around his arm; "A buckler," he said, "by which the Mother of God defends me from the arrows of hell."

The sun had just risen to announce the glorious

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festival of Mary's triumph, when the countenance of the seraphic youth suddenly beamed with a brilliant, and serene joy. One moment after, he calmly expired. This happy death took place on the 15th of August, 1568, towards the close of his eighteenth year.

Can any of my young readers forget the feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka, on the 14th of November, or, can any child's heart resist the holy, lovely example of this youthful saint? Fervently beg of him, on that day, to obtain for you those solid virtues of faith, hope, charity, humility and purity, which made him a saint so admirable, even among the most venerable of the saints of God.



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SAINT STEPHEN.

WHAT saint could we choose for the month of December, dear children, more interesting than St. Stephen; the first, of all that multitude of disciples who crowded around our Blessed Lord, to lay down his life, and shed his blood, for Christ? The apostles, and many a zealous follower of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, lingered on through the summer, and autumn, and into the bleak winter, of a long life of hardships, earning their martyr's crown, as men earn the glory of a great name, when life had become a burden easy to lay down; while St. Stephen, was called, in the first freshness of the paschal joy, with the light of that Resurrection morning still kindling the fervors of his youthful soul, and making sacrifice more than easy—a joy, a triumph!

There is no doubt that St. Stephen was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord; for, immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, we find him perfectly instructed in the law of Christianity, and

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with the power to work miracles, while he preached with an earnestness that excited the fear of the Jews, and, their hatred. It was not, in that day, the first thought of a Christian to smooth down the rough and sharp edges of the doctrines of Christ. It was not supposed to be the best way of making converts to the new faith, to tell people that they could be "saved as well out of the Church as in it, if only they were honest in their detestation of it, if only they thought themselves safe." The first Christians were wholly given up to the glorious work of making Christ known as the Redeemer of men, and they were too much in earnest to flatter men into the belief that they could get to heaven in their own way; which would have been the same as to say, that their way was as good as God's way, and that Jesus Christ had been born, had suffered, and had died, all for no purpose.

This very easy way of taking care of one's own salvation, or of instructing others how to do so, was not, certainly, the way of the apostles, or of St. Stephen. They, certainly, did not tell people that it was really of very little importance what they believed, if they were only good, honest, well behaved, people. If they had done this, who, among the Jews, would ever have taken much thought or trouble about them? Instead of this we find them preaching, everywhere, the necessity to salvation of a belief in Jesus Christ, and of baptism in His name. I suspect that if St. Stephen should appear among us now, he would not be among the liberal sort of Christians, or the liberal

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sort of Catholics, who are ready to say anything which they think will flatter their neighbors, and make them good friends, and companions.

In those first days of Christian charity, when every Christian was known to every other Christian, there was a holy strife, as to who should be most ready to part with his own, special, privileges, for the good of the whole. Such was the zeal of their charity, that the apostles found it impossible for them to preach the gospel, and, at the same time, give out the alms put into their hands. Seven deacons were, therefore, appointed to this work, and the first one named was "Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

But the duty of a deacon also included teaching, and St. Stephen was attacked by the Jews who wished to dispute with him. When they found that they could not withstand his arguments, they bribed witnesses, as in the case of Our Lord Himself, to charge him with blasphemy against Moses and against God. Upon this false charge he was dragged before the Sanhedrim, or the highest Jewish court, and, after the accusation had been read, Caiphas, the high priest, ordered him to make his defence.

It was now that St. Stephen showed all the supernatural wisdom of one upon whom the Holy Ghost had descended, and, also, all the courage and constancy, which, like heavenly wisdom, are the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

With all the fiery eloquence of the Prophet Isaiah, he reminded them of the prophecies, beginning with

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the books of Moses, concerning the Messiah; and also reminded them how the very sacrifices of the temple were a figure which was well understood by the Jewish doctors of the law, of a better and more perfect Sacrifice, which he showed to have been completed in the Sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Then, seeing, no doubt, the unbelief of their hearts written on their countenances, he accused them, in burning words, of having rejected and slain those prophets "who foretold the Just One; of whom," he said, "you are now the betrayers and murderers."

St. Luke tells us, while giving this account of St. Stephen, that "All who sat in the council, looking on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel;" yet, with this shining face before them, bright with the holy indignation of a St. Michael, they no sooner heard this truth concerning themselves, than, as St. Luke says, they were "cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth." But St. Stephen, nowise frightened by these signs of raging hate, "looking up steadfastly into heaven saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." No longer able to contain themselves for fury and revenge, "Crying out with a loud voice, and stopping their ears," as if to shut out their own yells, worthy of the demons, "with one accord they ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city they stoned him." But our holy deacon, Stephen, had no

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resentment towards his cruel murderers. His indignation was not against them, but against their sin—their sin of unbelief; that sin which is now thought so little of that people are not ashamed of it, are even proud of it, and seem to think it a mark of superiority —it was against their sin, and not against them, that St. Stephen had uttered such burning words; and therefore, while the heavy stones were hurled upon him from all sides, he could say, with a just confidence in his Divine Master, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Then, "Falling on his knees he cried with a loud voice, saying; Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep in the Lord."

Such was the death of the first martyr, "the protomartyr," as he is called, the model of all martyrs, so long as Christ shall ask the testimony of Christian blood for His truth. However you may look at this martyrdom, from whatever side you may approach it, it is still the same; and, after eighteen hundred years, almost nineteen hundred, we still go back to it to learn how to confess Christ, and how to suffer for him.

In the course of this narrative, at its very close, St. Luke tells us that "the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul;" and again, that "Saul was consenting unto his death."

This, my dear children, is the first mention made in the Bible of Saul of Tarsus. Afterwards we hear of him as going to the chief priest, for letters to the syn-

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agogues of Damascus; still "breathing out," as St. Luke tells us, "threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," and intending to bring the men and women he might find, who were of this way, to Jerusalem, bound.

How little did Saul imagine when he set out, with his armed guard, for Damascus, what was really before him! He remembered, no doubt, the martyr, Stephen; but he remembered him to despise him; remembered him as another reason for persecuting every Christian he should meet. How is it, we say to ourselves, that this martyrdom, of which we cannot read the barest account without making acts of veneration, should not have sent one arrow of remorse into the conscience of Saul, should, indeed, only have increased his hatred of the Christians?

We can never give an answer to such questions, but, we do know, that not one drop of a martyr's blood is ever shed in vain; and, the martyr's prayer—what shall we say of that? St. Stephen had been one month dead; the blood of the martyr still clung to the stones lying on that waste field outside the city, and some poor Hebrew, perhaps, shuddered, as he remembered the awful scene of murder that went on there, but without courage enough to express his horror, even to himself when alone. There had been no rising from the dead with St. Stephen, and the prayer he uttered in behalf of his persecutors was heard with derision by his enemies, and was scarcely remembered after these few weeks. But the prayer which men

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could afford to despise, forget, had never been forgotten by that Jesus who knows how to reward those who suffer for Him. St. Stephen had asked a favor of his Master at the very moment he was dying for Him. Do you think Jesus Christ would refuse it?

If the others, who had persecuted St. Stephen, were very guilty, how much more this young man, Saul, at whose feet the witnesses laid their garments and who, so ostentatiously, consented to his death! Therefore this most guilty one, according to some law in the mind of God, was the one in whom the prayer of St. Stephen was to find its answer; find it, too, when we should say it was least to be expected, when it was the least merited by the one who profited by it. For it was on this very journey to Damascus, that the same Lord Jesus, who had appeared to St. Stephen standing on the right hand of God while his poor disciple was standing before the judgment seat of his persecutors, who now appeared, in all the blinding splendor of His Heavenly glory, to Saul of Tarsus, on his way to ill-use others of his disciples, and followers; and, calling out from the midst of the intolerable brightness to the terror-stricken Saul, said; "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Saul could sneer at the deacon, Stephen, falling dead under the shower of stones; but he could not laugh, or sneer, or cavil, when our Lord thus called him to an account for this cruel treatment of His followers. There was but one word for Saul to speak, and he spoke it, prostrate on the ground, his mouth in the

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dust; "Who art thou, Lord?" And the glorious vision answered Saul; "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Saul has always been called an honest persecutor; and yet, Our Lord seems to say that he has resisted some grace, has "kicked against" some "goad" of conscience. But now there is no resisting of graces, no despising of opportunities. If Saul is admitted to have been the most honest of persecutors, how poor indeed is the shelter for the honesty of others when they must meet our Lord, face to face, and answer His question, "Why persecutest thou me?" The most honest persecutor will then be glad to say with Saul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

We have already followed, in the life of St. Paul, the wonderful story of Saul of Tarsus; but we can well afford to look over it again, in the Acts of the Apostles, while the prayer of St. Stephen is fresh in our minds. It has always been the belief of the Church, that the conversion of St. Paul was in answer to the prayer of the dying St. Stephen; and, to this day, the only sure means of converting the unbelieving, or those in any way gone astray from the path of safety, is—prayer. Prayer is our catechism, prayer is our logic, prayer is the one arrow which can pierce the shield that unbelief holds up to ward off the unwelcome conviction of the truth of Christ, and the truth of His Church. Jesus has promised that the prayer of faith shall not go unheard, shall not go unanswered; and, day and night, the incense of these

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prevailing prayers is going up before Him whose "arm is not shortened that it cannot save." How strange that we should ever doubt, ever waver in our confidence, our perfect confidence, in prayer! How strange that we must go back to the first martyr, St. Stephen, to be convinced of the might of prayer! How strange that we will go on, trying everything else, before we try prayer!

There is one more lesson to be learned as we stand by the side of the proto-martyr. It is very hard, sometimes, to suffer for our faith, without feeling resentment towards those who are thus loading us with injuries; but the prayer of St. Stephen tells us the true character of such resentment. If St. Stephen had resented the ill treatment of the Jews, he would not have been a martyr, would not have been what he was, a saint. Neither is it for us to distinguish between what we suffer for our faith, and what we suffer from the ill-temper, or imperfections of others. Not one, nor two, nor three, sorts of injuries are to be forgiven, but every sort of injury is to be forgiven so as never to be in any way avenged, if we would be like St. Stephen. No one can have injured us so deeply that we cannot pray for him, that we cannot serve him, if it is ever in our power to do so; and, above all, serve him in his spiritual necessities, which we can do without ostentation and without remark; and this, will, in itself, disarm every feeling of resentment or of revenge.

When beset by temptations to resentment, remem-

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ber St. Stephen, and let this collect, which the Church recites every year on the feast of St. Stephen, be so familiar to you that you can, any time, repeat it, and thus ward off every feeling of bitterness:

"Grant us grace, O Lord, we beseech thee, so to imitate what we revere, that we may love even our enemies; as we now celebrate the birthday to immortality of him who knew to ask forgiveness, even for his persecutors, of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."

The picture which I have copied for you, is by Fra Bartolommeo, a Dominican friar, and represents St. Stephen standing in a niche, young, and clothed in the embroidered vestment, or dalmatic of a deacon. In his hand, is the palm of martyrdom and of victory, and beside him lie the heavy stones with which the infuriated people of his own nation bruised him to death, setting free his gentle, forgiving, and heroic spirit. Who can look on that uplifted face, which shone, even to the eyes of his persecutors, like the face of an angel, without saying: Holy St. Stephen, pray for us!



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SAINT LUCY.

A FEW blocks from the place where I am writing is a hospital, not for the blind, but for those who are likely to become so. The light comes into the rooms through soft green shades, and everything is done to keep its inmates cheerful. On the walls are prints and lithographs, pictures that soothe the anxious mind, and give a ray of heavenly hope to the most desponding. One of the pictures has a peculiar fitness for this place. Indeed the saint whom it represents, the gentle patroness and friend of the blind, is no other than St. Lucy, whose name in Latin, *Lucia*, means light, and one of whose sufferings, during her long martyrdom, was to lose her eyes.

St. Lucy was born in the city of Syracuse, in the Island of Sicily. Her parents were wealthy and honorable. She was educated, from her cradle, as a Christian, and so early did this tender seed blossom, and bear fruit in her heart, that when, at the age of

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fourteen, she was betrothed by her parents to a young nobleman, she had already dedicated herself to God, in the secrecy of her own heart.

Strange to say, these parents, who had taken such care to instruct their little daughter in the love of Christian truth, and in the practice of every virtue, did not hesitate to betroth her to one who was a pagan, because he was noble and very rich. St. Lucy put every obstacle between herself and her marriage, and at length her mother was attacked by a very grievous disease, under which, for four years, she languished in a state beyond the power of any physician to help her.

Lucy now urged her mother to visit the tomb of St. Agatha (in Catania on their own Island of Sicily), who, in 251, suffered a most cruel martyrdom for her Divine Spouse. Lucy accompanied her mother to Catania, and there, before the tomb of St. Agatha, obtained by her prayers, and the prayers of St. Agatha, the cure of her mother. After this miraculous cure, St. Lucy told her mother of the promise which she had made, and entreated her to be allowed to fulfill it; and, at the same time, to sell all her possessions in order to give them to the poor in alms. Eutychia, her mother, was very unwilling to consent to this request, and, especially, to her giving away all her vast fortune; but at last, seeing Lucy's great importunity, and somewhat softened, it may be, by the cure of her disease, she consented, saying: "My child, I am content; do with all my riches as you will; only let me die first, lest during my lifetime I become a beggar."

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To this Lucy answered with a smile, "Of a certainty, O my mother, God hath little care for that which a man dedicates to His service only when he can no longer enjoy it himself. What doth it profit to leave behind that which we cannot carry away?" Her mother was convinced, by these words, of her mistake, and said, "Do as thou wilt, my daughter." So Lucia, with great gladness of heart, sold all their possessions and gave the money to the poor and the sick, to the widows and the orphans.

Now when the young nobleman to whom she was betrothed, heard of this, he was greatly enraged. He was very glad to marry Lucy with all her vast treasures, although he knew her to be a Christian; but when he found that her treasures were not to be his, that he could not profit by this marriage with a portionless Christian, he very soon found out how little he really loved Lucy, for he went immediately to the governor and *denounced* her as a Christian. Like the lover of St. Dorothea, his affection was of that false sort, which is changed to hate by contradiction; like base metals, such as copper and brass, which change their color when long exposed to the air, or if touched by acid, while the pure gold never grows dim.

The governor, Pascasius, ordered her to be brought before him, commanding her to sacrifice to the gods. When she refused, he ordered her to be taken to a place of shame, treated with indignity, and humbled to his will. But this pagan governor, who knew what value a Christian maiden sets upon her virtue

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and therefore threatened her with its loss, knew not that the God of the Christian maiden, and her Divine Spouse, could protect what she cherished for His sake; for behold! when these wicked men attempted to seize her and drag her away by force, the maiden suddenly became, by the power of God, immovable. They brought ropes, fastening them to her waist, but the more they tried to move her, the more firmly she stood there. Then Pascasius sent for magicians and enchanters; but their spells and incantations failed also. Then, in his rage, he ordered a fire to be kindled around her; but she prayed that the fire might not harm her, and that her enemies might be confounded. After this, one of the servants of the governor, seeing that his fury was gratified by any torture of her innocent body, thrust a poignard into her throat, and of this wound God was pleased to let her die. The Christians took her body and buried it on the very spot where she had suffered with such constancy, and there a church was afterwards built and called by her name.

It is not told in her acts how, or exactly at what time, she suffered the loss of her eyes; but her most careful historians speak of this as one of her grievous torments, and, in commemoration of it, she is invoked by those who are anxiously trying every means to preserve the precious gift of sight.

In pictures, St. Lucy is known, either by her eyes laid upon a dish which she carries in her hand, as if they had been plucked out with cruel violence, re-

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ferring to this tradition concerning her martyrdom; or by a lighted lamp in her hand, referring to her name, Lucia, which, as I have said, means light. In both cases she carries the blessed palm of a martyr. Our beloved monk, Fra Angelico, has painted her with her lamp in her hand, beautiful, with fair hair and in pale green drapery. In a picture by another painter, St. Lucy is giving her palm to Our Lady, while an angel holds her eyes in a cup. Sometimes she is painted with a wound in her neck, from which beam rays of light, in allusion to her name, as the one by Carlo Dolce in the Florence Gallery. At Padua, where St. Anthony lived, there is an ancient fresco, representing her with ropes about her waist, her neck, her arms; and men, and even oxen, are trying, in vain, to move her, standing as she does, not in her own strength, but in the Almighty power of God, and with a confidence full of Christian meekness.

The great Italian poet, Dante, must have had, what we should call, a special devotion to St. Lucy, for he has introduced her into each of the three parts of his immortal poem. In one of his scenes in Hell, he calls upon her as

"Lucia, of all cruelty the foe;"

In his Purgatory, these lovely lines celebrate her gentle praises:

"Ere the dawn
Ushered the daylight, when thy wearied soul
Slept in thee, o'er the flowery vale beneath

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> A lady came, and thus bespake me: 'I
> Am Lucia. Suffer me to take this man,
> Who slumbers. Easier so his way shall speed.'
> Here did she place thee. First her lovely eyes
> That open entrance showed me; then at once
> She vanished with thy sleep;"

and in his Paradise, he says,

> "Lucia, at whose hest thy lady sped."

After this we cannot doubt that St. Lucy has been very dear both to the artists and poets of Christendom, and neither can we doubt that she has deserved this admiring affection. It is for us to hold fast to the holy and beautiful traditions of the early Church, which are always fresh, always living, like the immortal flowers of Paradise, and not to be treated by us like the dry, scentless flowers collected in our herbariums.

St. Lucia suffered martyrdom on the 13th of December, in the year 304, the same year in which St. Agnes gave up her young life for Christ; and these virgin martyrs have come down together through the long, and often troubled, and blood-stained, ages, both in the Canon of the Mass, in which they are invoked by name, and, also, in the Litany of the Saints, where with St. Cecilia, St. Catherine, and St. Agatha, they shine as the five wise virgins, who took the oil of divine love in their lamps and went joyfully forth to meet their celestial Bridegroom.

How can any little girl, after reading the lives of such charming virgins and heroic martyrs, ever con-

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sent to be worldly, fond of dress, careless of her soul? Never let their holy examples fade from your memory, and, on the feast of St. Lucy, while asking, perhaps, for her powerful prayers in behalf of some dear friend whose blinded eyes are not yet wholly dark, ask her prayers, also, to obtain for yourself the light of that heavenly wisdom of which she is the symbol.



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APPENDIX.

PATRON SAINTS was already in the hands of the type-setters and the electrotypers, when the news came across the stormy ocean that the Holy Father, Pius IX., had, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, proclaimed St. Joseph the Patron of the Universal Church. I was therefore obliged, however unwillingly, to let the life of St. Joseph stand, just as it had been written. But I have decided to put into an appendix, an account of this act of justice toward so great and so humble a saint, and thus, make it quite sure that all my young friends understand, that devotion to St. Joseph is not only allowed by the Church, approved by the Church, but encouraged and urged upon us by the Church. We can, therefore, feel no hesitation about the honors we are to pay to St. Joseph, and if some one should say that we are inclined to dress his altar too much, put too many flowers upon it, such as lilies and roses and choice pansies, or too many lighted wax-candles, we

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can defend ourselves by saying, "Do you not remember that the Holy Father, Pius IX., has declared him to be the Patron of the Universal Church, and did he not mean, by this, that he wished us to give special honor to St. Joseph, in return for his protection of the Church, and the blessings he will obtain for us?"

The best way to give you the confidence which I wish you all to have in St. Joseph, is to copy, word for word as it has been translated from Latin into English, the decree by which this new honor, paid to St. Joseph, was proclaimed to the whole Christian world. That you may not waste your time puzzling over old Latin words, I will tell you that the title, "*Decretum Urbis et Orbis*," would read in English, "Decree for the City and the World." Here, then, is a copy of the Decree:

DECRETUM URBIS ET ORBIS.

"As Almighty God appointed Joseph, son of the Patriarch Jacob, over all the land of Egypt, to save corn for the people, so when the fullness of time was come, and He was about to send on earth His only-begotten Son, the Saviour of the World, He chose another Joseph, of whom the first Joseph had been the type, and whom He made the lord and chief of His household, and possessor and guardian of His choicest treasures. So, also, He espoused to Himself the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of whom was born, by the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ our Lord, who, as before men, deigned to be reputed the son of Joseph, and

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was subject unto him. And He whom so many kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only saw, but conversed with and embraced with paternal affection, and kissed, and most sedulously nourished, even Him whom the faithful were to receive as the Bread that came down from Heaven, that they might obtain eternal life. On account of this sublime dignity which God conferred on His most faithful servant, the Church has always most highly honored and praised the most Blessed Joseph, next to his spouse, the Virgin Mother of God, and has besought his intercession in times of trouble. And now that in these most troublous times the Church is beset by enemies on every side, and is weighed down by heavy calamities, so that ungodly men imagine the gates of hell to have at length prevailed against her, therefore the Venerable Prelates of the Catholic world have presented to the Sovereign Pontiff their own petitions and those of the Faithful committed to their charge, praying that he would vouchsafe to constitute St. Joseph, Patron of the Catholic Church. They, also, renewed still more earnestly this their prayer and desire at the Sacred Æcumenical Council of the Vatican. Therefore our most Holy Lord, Pius IX., Pope, being moved by the recent mournful events, has been pleased to comply with the desires of the Prelates, and to commit to St. Joseph's most powerful patronage, Himself and all the Faithful, and has declared St. Joseph, *Patron of the Catholic Church;* and has commanded his festival, occurring on the 19th day of

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March, to be celebrated for the future as a Double of the First Class, but yet without an Octave on account of Lent.

Finally, he has ordained that on this day, sacred to the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and her most chaste spouse St. Joseph, a declaration to that effect by this present Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites be then published. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

The 8th day of December, 1870.

CONSTANTINE,

Bishop of Ostia and Velletri; CARDINAL PATRIZI, Prefect of the Sacred College.

Loco ✠ Signi.

D. BARTOLINI, *Sec.*

If you were climbing a very steep hill, and should see before you, places steeper and harder to climb than any you had yet climbed over, and if, while clambering up this steep path with all your might, and while feeling the loose stones giving way at every step under your feet or cutting them with their sharp edges, you should see several branches hanging down within your reach, you would not only seize one of the branches to help you up the steep mountain-side, but you would take care to seize the very longest and strongest one within your reach; the very one, indeed, which looked the most able to help you.

This seizing of the longest and strongest branch, is precisely what the Holy Father, Pius IX., has done

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by declaring St. Joseph to be the Patron, or the protector and friend, of the Universal Church.

Very likely you may have thought of St. Joseph as one whose vocation was accomplished, whose career was over, when he had taken care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and had watched over the infancy, childhood and youth of her Divine Son. It was, certainly, a vocation and a career sublime enough to have taken up all St. Joseph's thoughts, and, also, to have excused him from all further duties; the wonder, too, which you may sometimes have felt, that St. Joseph did not stay on earth to protect the Blessed Virgin during the terrible passion of our Lord, may have inclined you to think that his work was over when Jesus became a man; and all this would be probable if the saints were not very different from most of us. When we have finished an important piece of work, we feel that we have a right to rest upon it; like the officers in the army or navy, who are excused, after living to a certain age, from the active labors of their rank. But the saints have a much more noble way of working than this. As they do every thing for the love of God, and as their love of God not only never ceases, but is always increasing, their labors and their prayers never cease; and, if we look a little longer at St. Joseph, we shall see why his work would not, could not end, except with the end of the world.

If we turn back to Nazareth, after the Archangel Gabriel had announced to Mary the greatness of her

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dignity as the Mother of the Messias, and before the birth of our Divine Lord, how wonderful a life was our humble friend, Joseph the carpenter, living! It was not to Mary alone that he found himself the protector, but to the Hope and the Expectation of Israel; and it is almost impossible to imagine the veneration with which St. Joseph attended upon Mary, supplied all her necessities, saved her from dangers and fatigues, and, in every way possible, ministered to her happiness. No one outside that humble home could tell why it seemed such a holy as well as a happy home; but some wonderful beauty shone forth in its low rooms that was more than summer and more than sunshine; for Jesus was there, hidden, but still always present, as He is upon our altars to-day.

When they left their cottage on the hill-side of the little city of Nazareth, one cold morning in December, and started on their wintry journey to Bethlehem—when they reached Bethlehem to find all the doors of its houses, large and small, rich and poor, shut against them—when they were glad to find a rude stable on the edge of the town, used only by the ox and the ass, which were willing to share it with them, and went in to wait, there, for His coming who had created all things—it was not for himself that St. Joseph was in the least anxious. He could bear heat and cold, wet and dry; he could, for himself, have slept soundly on the bare earth like the shepherds, at that very time keeping watch over their flocks on the hills; but his soul melted with pity for the tender virgin given into

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his care to whom the world was showing so rude a manner and so unkind a face; and, even more than for Mary, for the little Omnipotent One, who had chosen for Himself so cheerless a birth-place. There is no way to sound the deep and tender compassion of St. Joseph, that night, for the shivering Infant, and His adoring Mother. On Christmas night, if you have ever been at a midnight mass, you may have tried to realize it, but you only felt how very far it was above you and below you, and you felt as if you could sink down, forever, into the deep, tender, compassionate heart of St. Joseph.

Again: when St. Joseph had been visited in his sleep by the angel whose voice he knew so well, and, without a question or a minute's delay, rose from his hard couch, roused, very gently, the Blessed Virgin, setting her, with her little infant, on the meek ass which had shared the stable with them, and started, while it was yet deep night, on the long weary journey to Egypt —it was not for himself that St. Joseph felt so keenly all the discomforts of that journey, even when compared with their life in the stable, but it was for the Virgin Mother and the Divine Child. Perhaps he thought more than once, that meek and gentle husband of Mary, of their pleasant cottage at Nazareth and of the summer they had spent there; but he never lingered, never hesitated; and when he found himself in a strange country, among dark faces with fierce eyes, and hideous idols on every side, it was not for himself that he shuddered, but for Jesus, insulted by the presence

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of these idols and their worshippers, as he bore Him in his arms with a love which was also adoration. We can never sound the desire which St. Joseph had, at this time, to make reparation for the gross sins of idolatrous generations, any more than we could sound his compassion in the stable of Bethlehem. Perhaps we may try to do this when we see Jesus despised in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, but we know that we must always fall very far short of St. Joseph even in our moments of most ardent devotion.

From this review of the life of St. Joseph, we see how every thing was done for Jesus, either to protect Him from dangers, and to give Him a quiet home, or to help Jesus carry out His plans for the salvation of men. Much as St. Joseph loved Mary, it was for "Mary the mother of Jesus," that he undertook such great labors and forgot all his own affairs and interests. And this lets us, at once, into the secret of this calling upon St. Joseph, by the Holy Father, to be the Patron of the Universal Church. There is work to be done for Jesus now, and who so ready to do that work, who so used to doing that work, as St. Joseph? Jesus is to be protected now, in the person of His Vicar, the head of the Church, Pius IX., and who will be more alive to the danger of the Church and of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, than he who "took the young child and his mother," into a place of safety — distant as that place of safety was? Jesus is to be served and borne in the arms now, by His faithful priests, and at the risk of life even, not only in pagan lands but in the coun-

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tries and beautiful cities of civilized, Christian Europe; and who will be so ready to teach these priests how they are to serve Him, and bear Him in their arms, and give Him to His sheep, scattered and desponding, as St. Joseph, who carried Him with so steadfast and prudent a courage through the high-ways and by-ways, and across the stretches of desert sand on the flight into Egypt? Jesus is to be protected and honored now, in the persons of holy monks and of holy nuns, who have given up the world to live in their consecrated homes as in so many Nazareths, but whom rulers, who call themselves Christians, are driving from these sacred retreats of peace, and of prayer, into the noisy and wicked world again, compelling them to fly before their unpitying persecutors; and who so able, or so willing, to protect them as St. Joseph, who was willing to live in Egypt, that land of darkness and of the most disgusting idolatry, in order to protect Jesus, driven even from the stable of Bethlehem by the murderous Herod, and afterwards bringing Him back, with most glad heart, to Nazareth, and to all the peace of its humble cottage?

After spending even these few minutes in recalling the meek goodness of St. Joseph, his unassuming fidelity and perfect singleness of mind, contented with pleasing Jesus, as he was appointed to serve Him, without having any regard to the way in which his service would be looked upon or esteemed by the people around him, how beautiful seems the honor now paid to St. Joseph by the whole Christian world, from

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the Holy Father himself, cardinals, bishops, priests, down to the very poorest and humblest child of the Catholic Church, who pins up a little picture of St. Joseph on the wall beside his bed, asking St. Joseph, when he kneels to say his morning and evening prayers, to pray for him, to be *his* protector and friend, as he is the protector and friend of the whole Church! How beautiful, as I have said, does all this seem, and *how just!* Our Lord said, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." St. Joseph was the most humble of men, as our Blessed Lady was the most humble of all creatures; now, he is the most honored of all men, and held in esteem next to the Blessed Virgin herself.

Remember, my dear children, it is not enough for us that the Church honors St. Joseph. She honors him in order that *we* may honor him, and thus win for ourselves, and for the Church, his favor, his friendship, and his protection. Let us, then, follow the example of our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church, each and all of us choosing St. Joseph as our dear patron in life and in death; the patron of our homes, of our families, of all we hold dear. We may thus expect our riches to be turned into the eternal riches of the children of God, and our poverty will be the *holy poverty* which has always been so dear to the saints of God, especially to St. Joseph. We shall feel contented with our lot in life, whatever it may be, and we shall be contented to die whenever God may call us, for we shall have one for our friend, in

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every event, so kind, so powerful, as to be chosen by the Church as her Universal Patron; and we shall say with the Church, "Blessed Joseph is the helper in trouble, and the protector of all those who piously call upon him in danger."

Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, 1871.



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PATRON SAINTS

SECOND SERIES

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SECOND SERIES

PATRON SAINTS

BY

ELIZA ALLEN STARR

Golden vials full of odours which are the prayers of the saints

—APOCALYPSE V 8

CHICAGO
ELIZA ALLEN STARR
299 HURON STREET
1896

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IMPRIMATUR

PATRITIUS AUGUSTINUS

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To the Faithful Youth

OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AMERICA

TO WHOSE INTERESTS I AM PROUD TO DEVOTE MY LIFE

THESE ADDITIONAL SKETCHES OF THEIR

Patron Saints

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

St. Joseph's Cottage Chicago
Feast of All Saints MDCCCLXXX

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I cordially recommend "PATRON SAINTS," by Miss ELIZA ALLEN STARR, as a book eminently suited to Catholic youth.

John Carr. McCloskey
Archbp. of New York

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INTRODUCTION

FOR more than two centuries and a half, a serial work, known as the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, has testified to the undiminished interest of Christendom in the Lives of the Saints. The histories contained in its more than sixty folio volumes have been derived, not only from books, but from existing monuments, from national and monastic archives and traditions, and from the veneration in which these saints are still regarded in the localities enriched by their relics, or honored as the ground which they tilled for God. And these histories are not a dead letter in the world. They enter, as essential elements, into the art and literature of the most enlightened nations on the face of the earth. A knowledge of them is more necessary to an intelligent enjoyment of the Christian art and the Christian monuments of Europe, whether historically or artistically considered, than a knowledge of all the foreign languages, classical or modern.

Every day persons are heard to ask: "What books should we read in order to prepare for a visit to Europe?" The true answer to this question is: "The Lives of the Saints," written enough in detail to give the events and circumstances which have most impressed the popular mind, and have thus taken the

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form of legends. Without some acquaintance with these legends, these traditions, it is useless to try to do more than stumble through the best guide book in the world. The essential idea in the most precious monuments, the masterpieces of art, is lost; just as it would be lost for a monument or masterpiece of pagan times by an ignorance of mythology or history; an ignorance so needless that it is considered inexcusable.

But the time is even now present, when the best galleries of America will exact the same preparation for an intelligent enjoyment of their choice things, as the European. Among the treasures of *Santa Maria del Fiore* in Florence, the cathedral of the City of the Lily, the Blessed Virgin's own flower, is a chest or shrine in bronze, containing the relics of Saint Zenobio, one of the early bishops of Florence. On the front and ends of this shrine are represented, in bas-relief, three miracles wrought by the saint. On the back of the shrine is a garland of elm leaves, in relief, sustained by angels. "Elm leaves! why not bay or laurel, or still better, the leaves of the sacred olive?" and in vain shall we consult works on art for a reply. But in the full life of this Saint Zenobio, as given in *Les Petits Bollandistes*, we read of an elm tree, dry, utterly dead, which put forth green leaves when the body of the dead bishop, on its way to the church, was pushed against it by the eager, venerating multitude; eager to touch but his garment. Ghiberti, who lived a thousand years after all this happened, was familiar with the legend, and without representing the actual scene, transmitted the memory of it to future generations by this garland of elm leaves sustained by angels, on the back of the shrine. Every Florentine understands this, and will tell how the people, enthusiastic over the miraculous foliation of the dead elm, stripped it first of its leaves, then of its twigs and branches, and finally chipped away the trunk itself, as relics; and how the municipal authorities, seeing it impossible to preserve the tree, erected a pillar in its place with an

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inscription giving all these circumstances. Every Florentine understands this, but how many Americans? And thus the artist speaks to our people in an unknown language.

On the walls of the Boston Museum of Art are copies, in plaster, of these three reliefs on the bronze shrine of Saint Zenobio, and they are almost as much of a dead language to the general visitor as the garland of elm leaves would be. Yet this is only one instance of the loss resulting from an ignorance of the barest outlines of the lives of these saints who have been the inspiration of succeeding ages in all gentle arts, as they were of their own in all that belongs to the highest forms of spiritual life.

The famous frescoes by Raphael, on the walls of one of the chambers in the Vatican, are good tests of the relative study given to pagan and Christian traditions. The outlines of the School of Athens have been made familiar to every school-boy by its repetition in wood-cuts; while the scholars of our own day have carefully studied out each figure in the various groups and given it a place among the philosophers; and would brand as ignorant of the commonest facts in the history of Greece and of the schools, anyone who might be ignorant of the leading ideas advocated by these philosophers. But on another wall of the same room, as a pendant to his Theologia, the most sublime of the four symbolical figures on the ceiling, is another fresco, of such beauty as to arrangement, of such grace and earnestness in the various personages and groups, of such effulgence as to atmosphere, and pervaded by such an air of celestial inspiration, as to be declared the most wonderful of all Raphael's frescoes, as his Sistine Madonna is the most wonderful of his Madonnas. Yet, there are few people who would feel really ashamed to confess themselves ignorant as to the names of the different personages there represented; still less as to the special reason for their having obtained an honored place among the saints ranged in lovely symmetry on each side of the heavenly vision, or with

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those saints on earth who have elucidated by their writings the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament. The key to the "*School of Athens*" is in the history of Greek philosophy, of pagan literature; the key to the "*Disputa*" is in the Lives of the Saints, in the story of their triumphs over error, or in the peaceful establishment of the faith in the minds of their generations.

It is in the conviction, that, to the study of the history of the Church in her saints, to the veneration cherished for them personally, and the admiration roused by the recital of their heroic sanctity, we owe, in great part, the poetry and art which most charms even those who do not profess to believe in their intercession; and to the conviction that not only Catholic faith and Catholic life, but Catholic literature, derives a thousand nameless graces from that habitual regard for the saints which comes, and comes only, from a knowledge of them, that this Second Series of Patron Saints has been prepared for the Catholic youth of America. We are living in an age of saints, like all those christians who have preceded us; for the Church of God is always fruitful. Supernatural lives, miraculous lives, are going on in the midst of all the worldliness of our day and our generation; not only in spite of this worldliness, but, as it were, in consequence of it, because these supernatural and miraculous lives are lives of reparation for the sins of their age. To be blind to all this, is like living in a time of great knowledge and enlightenment and still to be ignorant. There is no such key to the present as a knowledge of the past, and the saints of other ages help us to understand and properly to value, the saints of our own. Not only this; they help us to co-operate with them, by inciting us to take up on the side of God, on the side of the Church, of Christian liberty, Christian civilization, Christian art, Christian literature, Christian morals, in the great combat which good is ever waging with evil, truth with error, light with darkness. Let our battle-cry be that of Saint Michael, prince of angels and archangels, who

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pointed the spear which overcame Lucifer with the cry: *Who is like God?* while, with the Church, we add to our ascriptions of praise, *Blessed be God in his holy angels and in his saints!*

SAINT JOSEPH'S COTTAGE,
Feast of All Saints, 1880.



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SAINT GUDULA.

ON the rising ground of the old city of Brussels, the capital of Belgium, with streets looking up to it and ending with it, stands the cathedral, with its twin towers and their Gothic windows, and a front which reminds one of Notre Dame in Paris. To many, this Brussels is merely the city where fine laces are wrought; yet a far more precious renown has been made for it by a saint whose name has been given to its cathedral, Saint Gudula. Ages ago, this church bore the name of Saint Michael, Archangel; but even this august name yielded to the devotion of the Belgians to Saint Gudula, their own special saint; and under her patronage this cathedral has become one of the treasure houses of religious art.

Our Gudula was born as early as 652, and was a beloved child of one of the most illustrious families of Brabant; illustrious not only for its wealth and lineage, but for its sanctity. Her father, Witger, is called the Blessed Witger; and her mother, Amalberge, was not only beatified but canonized. Her brother, who succeeded Saint Vindicien as Bishop of Cambrai and Arras, is known as Saint Emebert; while her sister Reynelde was not only a saint, but a martyr. Their aunt, Saint Gertrude of Nivelles—who was a daughter of Saint Pepin of Landin, and granddaughter of that

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Saint Carloman who gave up his right to a crown and a throne, in order to live at Monte Cassino as a Benedictine monk—stood godmother to both these little girls. As soon as they were old enough to leave their home, they were sent to their aunt, to be educated in her convent at Nivelles. Here the little Gudula, as well as her sister Reynelde, showed a wonderful pleasure in all the pious exercises of the nuns. Whatever they saw the sisters doing, they were sure to imitate. Prayers, processions, kneeling in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament, were pleasures instead of crosses to them. They even kept still during the meditation hour in chapel, fixing their minds and hearts on the Scripture which had been read aloud for the nuns to meditate upon. "Like the intelligent bee," says the one who first wrote her life, "she gathered into the hive of her heart the juices of the flowers of virtue, in order to form the honeycomb of all sorts of good works. Chaste in body and in mind, affable to everyone, she excelled also in patience, humility, sweetness, and piety."

But the dear retreat at Nivelles was soon to be deprived of its cherished mother. In 664 their aunt, the holy Gertrude, was called by God to her celestial reward, and both the little girls returned to their parents. It was with a joy not to be told, that these good parents saw the heroic virtue practiced by these mere children. It was not in the atmosphere of a convent alone, where everything reminded them of their nearness to God, that these dear children were pious. But amid all the distracting delights of their home, among their friends, they found time to pray and meditate regularly. Nor did their parents ever disturb their innocent plans. Seeing that they loved the rule of religious life, were not weary of its gentle yoke, they allowed them to cherish a desire to live under the rule they loved, and to be protected from the world by the walls of a convent. This desire, too, which they saw in their little daughters, seemed all the more amiable because of their lovely manners toward everyone around

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them. They never talked about being tired of the world; but they spoke very often of the happiness of living for God.

It was during this peaceful, happy time, when all these saints were living together in one family, that Gudula used to go, every morning at the crowing of the cock, to the parish church for the first mass. As it was always dark at this hour, unless in mid-summer, she was in the habit of taking a little lantern with her, to find her way along the stony path. The spirits of evil no sooner saw this young girl leaving, regularly, her warm chamber and the comforts of her father's house at this cheerless hour, to make her way alone to the cold church, than they resolved to put into her heart such a fear of the darkness and of the lonely way as to discourage her. This accomplished, they would wean her from some other pious habit, and "by and by," they said, "she will forget all about her convent ways, or think them unsuited to the world, and will become a worldling, like so many others who have been pious school-girls in convents." They began by blowing out the small flame in her lantern, by, what seemed to Gudula, a sudden gust of wind, and thus, as they supposed, leaving her to grope her way in the darkness. But if evil spirits were waiting upon the steps of this holy young girl, there were also good spirits; bright and shining angels, who would not suffer her innocent soul to be disquieted, or her will to be turned from its holy purpose. No sooner, then, did one of these evil spirits blow out the small flame, than her angel guardian made haste to relight it; and thus she went on her way, morning after morning, through all the darkness of the winter months, her courage kept up by the angel tripping lightly by her side, and a holy confidence in this protection which no appearance of danger could disturb. Nor was this courage only on the way to church. She was quite sure that when her little lantern was so well protected, all other holy practices would be possible to her if she would only persevere.

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But while Gudula and Reynelde were constant in the exercises of piety which they had learned at Nivelles, and constant in their dearly cherished wish to wear, sometime, the religious habit and make the holy vows, they had no idea what was passing in the minds of their parents; of the desire for perfection which had taken full possession of both Witger and Amalberge. They had seen their father and mother living in such harmony and affection, seeming to be so necessary to each other, that their surprise was unbounded when they were told, by both Witger and Amalberge, in each other's presence, of the resolve they had made to devote themselves wholly to God in a state of holy obedience, holy poverty and holy chastity. Their father, Witger, was to go to the monastery of Lobbes, there in a life of peaceful devotion, forgotten by the world, to prepare for a happy death; while their mother, Amalberge, was to go to the convent of Maubeuge, to await the day when God would call her to himself.

But if their surprise was unbounded, so was their joy; not that they, alone, were free to follow the way of perfection; but that the parents whom they loved so tenderly, would go before them on this celestial way; this way of holy delights. There were no sighs of regret when this heavenly minded family separated. There might have been tears; but smiles broke through the tears, for they knew this separation was only for time, while the reunion would be for eternity. The young heads of Gudula and of Reynelde bowed to the very ground to receive the blessing of their parents, justly regarded with a veneration such as few children are permitted to feel towards even the most tenderly beloved father or mother; for had not God himself chosen them for his special friends, and were they not to be preceded at the court of the Great King by those who had given them more than nobility of birth, the heritage of faith?

The wealth to which they became heirs at this separation, was given in part to the poor and in part to the religious houses to

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which they were to go. Gudula went to Moorsel, a short distance from Ham. Here, in order to render her prayers more efficacious, she was careful to practice habitually some mortification which would not be seen by others. One of these mortifications was to make her early visit to the church in bare feet, no matter how cold the weather might be. Before entering the church, however, she was careful to slip her feet into her shoes, for fear of their being seen and her mortification spoken of; for, in those days, it was accounted a great merit to practice some severity towards one's self, and if Gudula had been seen in church without her shoes, she would not then, as now, have been called crazy, or laughed at as odd; but the people would have whispered one to another: "See! we have a saint among us!"

But the severity towards herself, as in all the saints, was contrasted with her extreme consideration towards others. Her humility was so very gentle, so very lowly, that she made every one ashamed of pride; and her compassion for the poor so tender that they never hesitated to tell her their necessities; nor did it seem a humiliation to take alms from one who seemed to consider herself favored by their accepting what she gave.

This singular sweetness of disposition was rewarded by God in a way to prove how acceptable it was to him, since it enabled her to give the consolation she so longed to impart. The gift of healing is one of those exercised by our Lord himself, and bestowed by him on his immediate apostles and disciples, with a promise that it should be transmitted to the disciples of other ages, when he said: "They shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover." This gift of healing has been one of the signs of God's exceeding condescension to the need of his suffering children; and, also, as a mark by which to distinguish those saints who were to give him glory in the eyes of men as well as of angels. This blessed gift of healing was imparted to Gudula, and we soon find her resorted to by all who were in affliction of any

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sort, as one whose prayers were sure to be heard in heaven; sure to prevail with Almighty God.

One day as Gudula was coming out from the oratory at Moorsel, where she had been praying for hours, a poor woman ran towards her, begging her to ask of God the cure of her infant son, utterly and hopelessly crippled. Gudula received this afflicted mother with a look of the most lively compassion, took the poor little deformed child in her arms and raised her heart to God with the fervor which belongs to his saints. At the same instant the child shook all over; then struggling to be placed down on the ground, walked towards his mother and threw himself into her arms without the least trace of his infirmities remaining with him. Another day when Gudula was in prayer, a woman disfigured with leprosy, begged to be healed. Immediately Gudula spread her hands over the head of the poor, loathsome, unfortunate one, and the skin, all one hideous sore, became beautiful and perfectly sound. The story of these wonderful cures was spread far and wide, and drew innumerable people to the humble virgin at Moorsel to secure her prayers before God.

It was in the practice of such interior virtues as humility and entire devotion to her Lord, and such exterior virtues as mortification and all sorts of charity to the neighbor, that the life of the happy Gudula ran quickly to its close. Already ripe for heaven, she prepared herself to meet the divine spouse of souls; and she longed ardently for the hour when she would see the face of Him whom she had always loved above all things, and contemplate its ineffable beauty through everlasting ages. It was in these dispositions that she slept peacefully in the Lord on the eighth of January, towards the year 710. Her funeral was celebrated in the midst of an immense concourse of the inhabitants of the country, who knew not how to express their grief at the death of their friend and benefactress. All, of every rank, even to the poorest peasants, recalled, with tears in their eyes, the benefits received

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from her, the consolations she had given to them under their afflictions, and the holy Christian resolutions with which she had inspired them.

The body of Saint Gudula reposed, for a long time, in the "Chapel of the Savior" at Moorsel, and the Emperor Charlemagne built a monastery there. It was not until the year 996 that Charles of Lorraine, brother of the French king Lothaire, had this precious body carried to the church of Saint Gery at Brussels. Afterwards her brother, the saintly bishop of Cambrai, transferred her relics to the Church of Saint Michael, Archangel, which ever since has borne the name of Saint Gudula.

The artists of Belgium have delighted in representing this favorite saint. Sometimes she is seen at her embroidering frame, working vestments for the sanctuary; sometimes, also, in a group with her mother, Saint Amalberge, and her sister, Saint Reynelde; but more often they represent her on her way to church at the early cock-crowing, her lantern in her hand, while an angel trips down to rekindle the flame which the envious spirits of evil have extinguished.

The name of Saint Gudula, and the story of her gentle virtues, are generally first learned by strangers on their visit to her church, situated, as we have said, on a high part of the city and overlooking it. The old church which stood on this ground in the tenth century gave place, in the eleventh century, to this elegant Gothic edifice, which was brought to its present perfection only in the year 1856. Greatly to be admired are the stained glass windows of the northern chapel, given by five Catholic princes of Europe, and on each one is the name of the donor. The windows of the southern chapel, which is dedicated to "Our Lady of Deliverance," are equally beautiful, and represent the life of the Blessed Virgin. The high altar is of wood, exquisitely carved. In a chapel behind the high altar is a window, with a picture representing Saint Gudula. Looking down the grand nave of the

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church, its lofty arches are seen springing from twelve pillars, against which stand statues of the twelve apostles; and on still another, they have found an opportunity to honor Saint Nicholas, the beloved bishop of Myra, and the dear Christmas saint of Christendom.

But the marvel of this church, the one which attracts travelers from every part of the world, is the pulpit; not in marble, like the pulpits of Siena and of Pisa in Italy, but in wood. In the lower part, between the steps which lead to the pulpit on either hand, is represented the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve, and above their heads are seen angels, driving out this guilty pair from the paradise of which they were no longer worthy, and upon which they had brought a curse. Nothing but the sight of this pulpit can give an idea of the shame and sorrow, the anguish of regret, in the faces and figures of our first parents as there represented; nor of the terrible beauty of the angels who hover above them and hurry them from their late happy home; while among the trees of the garden of paradise, which wave around the sad scene, are all sorts of birds and animals in the liveliest attitudes. Above the sounding board, with its branches of trees waving at the side, and the catching up of the scolloped drapery, is the statue of the Blessed Virgin, the new Eve, with the child Jesus, who carries a cross in his young hands, and with it crushes the head of the serpent. On each side of this pulpit, telling the story of the fall of man and of his redemption to every child in Brussels, in a way never to be forgotten, rises one of the grand pillars of the nave, with an apostle on its front; and behind the pillars we can see the beautiful windows of stained glass, with their stories lighted up by the sunshine, making a picture to be remembered forever.

The lace-makers of Brussels have not spent all their skill on the delicate fabrics for dress, which go from their city to every city in Europe or America; for, like all other arts in Catholic

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countries, that of the lace maker is given to the service of the one Creator and sole Redeemer, in the sanctuary and upon the altar. It would even seem as if those who worked in stone or wood, in this beautiful cathedral, had wrought with the delicacy which belongs to the lace weaver, with her cushion and bobbins. And the arches, almost lost to sight in their airy distances, and the altar and pulpit, rivaling in wood the marbles of Italy, show what the spirit of Catholic devotion has done to transform all things into the pure gold of a thank-offering to God for the graces obtained for us by his saints.



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SAINT SEBASTIAN.

DO you see that young officer, in his bright tribune's armor, standing at the right hand of the emperor? Although not of a Roman family, he has the bearing of one born within the shadow of the Capitol. As often as I watch the cohorts on grand parade days, that noble figure stands out from the whole legion. He is a favorite with both emperors. Diocletian made him captain of the first cohort before he left Rome for the east, and Maximian confirmed the honor. Yet this cannot be charged to the repute of his family alone, high as it is, but to his own bravery and absolute fidelity. In all Rome there is not a young noble who has a brighter future before him than Sebastian."

The speaker was an old patrician, in whose veins ran the best blood of the Roman nobility. He was addressing a young stranger from Pontus, to whom he was showing the wonders of the imperial city. On this particular day, Maximian gave audience to strangers, and to all those who had tidings to communicate from parts near or distant. At such times his favorite guards stood around his throne in all the glitter of their richly jeweled armor, and with all their badges of military distinction. Among them stood Sebastian, taller and slenderer than any of his companions, but with a certain firmness of step and majesty of bear-

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ing which not even the Roman soldier's drill, nor the service of a Roman veteran, could give. There was grandeur, without pride; fidelity, without servility. No wonder that Maximian, in his rude way, showed an admiration for the captain of his first cohort.

Diocletian had already sent forth his cruel edict against the Christians. By the authority of this edict, Christians could be seized in any part of the Roman dominion, carried before a magistrate, and receive sentence as enemies of the empire. It was with the news of such seizures, both in Rome and the provinces, that Maximian was chiefly entertained on the morning when the young stranger from Asia accompanied the Roman patrician to the audience chamber of the reigning Cæsar. Information had been given against men and women, old and young, but they were all alike to Maximian. All had been alike turned over to the prefect for examination, without one pitying inquiry. This prosecution of Christians, too poor to excite his love of money, too weak to resist his power, and too mean in the eyes of the emperor of the world to rouse his indignation, was becoming a dull business to Maximian. This morning, especially, he was growing tired of hearing the same story from smooth-tongued informers and mischief-makers, when a man of polished address and with a step as stealthy as a leopard's, knelt at the imperial footstool. "Speak!" growled Maximian, with a gesture of impatience. "What skulking Christian has been tracked to his hole?"

"Most gracious emperor," said the cringing informer.

"Be brief, I tell thee!"

"The emperor cannot be aware that in his own household, close to his very throne even, stands a Christian!"

"Speak out, sirrah! I will have no mysteries."

"Then, at your imperial command," said the wily courtier, in a bland voice, I accuse as a Christian the captain of your first cohort, Sebastian!" The emperor started to his feet. "Reptile!

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Thou liest! Prove thy words; or, by the gods, thou shalt die the death of a Christian dog, by a slow fire and hot pincers." The wily informer only smiled at the emperor's challenge, and in the same bland voice, continued: "Then the emperor of the world has not heard of the treachery within the imperial walls? He does not know why Marcus and Marcellianus, who were on the point of recanting, went, after all, boldly to death as Christians?"

"What are Marcus and Marcellianus to Maximian?" angrily hissed the emperor.

"And you have heard nothing of the keeper of the imperial records, Nicostratus, and his dumb wife, Zoe, who spoke at the command of——" At this very moment, Sebastian, with the same firm but light step which had ever marked him in the legion, passed from his place at the right hand of the emperor. Bowing respectfully to his imperial master, and with a courteous gesture toward the informer, he said, in a clear voice: "Sire, allow me to take from such feeble shoulders the burden of proof. From first to last, my service in the imperial army has been the service of a Christian."

"Tush, tush, Sebastian! I can ill afford to lose my first captain. Thou art still young. The honors of the empire are all before thee. Have done with this nonsense unworthy of a soldier, fit only for women and slaves. Swear allegiance to the gods of Rome, as thou hast ever practised allegiance to her emperors."

"Imperial sire, what is that false service which thou askest of me? As a Christian, I have served thee well; as an apostate and a perjurer, how could Maximian trust even Sebastian?"

"Rome and her gods are one. I will have no shielding of these Christian traitors at the hands of an imperial officer."

"Your imperial testimony has been on the side of Christian fidelity. How, then, can they be traitors?"

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"Sebastian, do not presume upon my love for you, nor upon my favor. Choose quickly between the honors of a Roman tribune, and the disgrace of a Christian death; between Maximian and thy Christ."

"Maximian is my emperor; but Christ Jesus is my one Lord and my one God, my Creator and my Redeemer. To Him I owe my first allegiance. Him do I choose before all others, and proclaim myself a Christian!" Never had his cohort, even in battle, seen so grand an expression on the face of Sebastian as when he uttered these words with a sort of solemn gladness that made every word ring out, like the notes of a silver trumpet, through the vast hall. Never, either, had courtiers or legions seen so horrible an expression on the brutal face of Maximian. Furies seemed to tear his heart, to fire his brain; and he roared out, like a wild beast more than a man: "Ho! bring Hyphax. The Numidian arrows are sure."

In less time than a modern officer would need to receive a command, the word of Maximian had been taken to Hyphax, the captain of the Numidian archers, and the black chief stood before the throne of the Cæsar. No words were wasted. Hate, cruelty, and revenge spoke through the glaring eyes, the clenched teeth of the tyrant, as he said: "Sebastian is a Christian!" The pagan savage started as if a scorpion had stung him, and looked at Sebastian with unutterable horror.

"Listen," said Maximian, recalling the attention of the captain of his archers to himself; "to-morrow morning, when the first ray of sunlight touches the temple of Jupiter, lead Sebastian to the grove of Adonis; there let your best archers shoot him slowly to death. *Slowly*, mind you. None of your keen arrows straight through the eye or heart; but slowly, touching no vital part, until he drops dead from loss of blood, and from the wild thirst of the wounded in battle and the long pain." This said, the emperor strode from the hall without further ceremony. Sebastian was

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hurried off to his prison, and the imperial audience was broken up for that day. The patrician and the young stranger from Pontus witnessed the whole of this scene without exchanging a word or a glance even, so swiftly had it passed before their eyes; so absorbed had been every faculty of body and of mind. They walked slowly, like men in a dream, from the palace into the clear air, and beneath the blue sky of the city of the Seven Hills. It was the younger one who broke the silence. "And this is the way that the emperor expects to crush out Christianity!" "Hush!" said the old patrician, "the birds of the air carry that word to the ears of the avaricious and the spiteful!" And on the face of each could be seen an abstracted look which showed how deeply they had been moved by the events of the morning; moved, not so much by pity, as by sincere and intelligent sympathy; for, the patrician and the youth were both Christians.

But what of Sebastian? When the rich armor of a tribune, which he had worn with such honor, was stripped from him, when he saw his jeweled sword and belt exchanged for the manacles and fetters of a prisoner, did no regret arise in his heart; no shrinking creep through his youthful nerves? Those who performed the ungracious task were dumb before the spectacle of a man, not yet thirty, laying aside, with a joyful countenance, the marks of distinguished rank for the chains of a prisoner condemned to death. Never had they felt so mysterious a respect for him as now. One soldier, as he left him, kissed the manacled hand of the bravest and best beloved captain of the imperial legions. When all this was over and Sebastian was left alone, when the step of the last soldier had died away on the marble pavement, there were but few hours to spend. The sun had risen upon him that morning to find a weary weight on his heart; for he saw his fellow Christians hunted down like sheep by the wolves. Now that his own turn had come there was no darkness in his cell. It was as if the angels had anticipated his entrance into heaven, and

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had come to meet him on his journey. When the first transport was over, he yielded to the need of rest, and found how sweetly a soldier of the cross can sleep on his prison floor.

The first pale light of the coming dawn roused Sebastian. How often had he roused, at that very hour, to hasten to some crypt of the catacombs, or to some palace of a Christian nobleman, to be present at the holy sacrifice of the mass! Now he united himself in spirit to that adorable sacrifice as he had never done before; for was he not to shed his blood for Him who had shed redeeming blood for man's salvation? One act of adoring love suffused his whole soul, and the ruddy blush of morning was not so deep as the seraphic glow on his uplifted face. His arms were spread according to the manner of the early Christians at prayer; and, hour after hour, those eyes were fixed on heaven in the joy of holy anticipation. When Hyphax entered the cell of his victim, he was instinctively ready to bow before him as to a supernatural being; but the emperor's command was in his ears, and his pagan soul was unenlightened by grace. In a few moments they were walking through the ranks of archers, and in less time than it takes to pen these words, his light clothing had been stripped from him. In full sunlight, so that the archer might not miss one aim, or vary a hair's breadth from the mark, his naked body was bound to an olive tree, and the bloody sport began. The archers, light-footed, light-handed Numidians, in gay colors aud fantastic ornaments, were scattered over the grove as for a match of skill. The first one held his bow close to his ear, then drew the elastic string of wild lion skin.

A whiz—whiz!

The first arrow touched the ear and left a few drops of blood on the tip.

Whiz!

Another, and another, and another; and now the blood trickled in slender rills down his whole body. As he stood for an instant,

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while the archers measured their distances, the head was thrown upward with a sense of joy, the eyes seemed to look through the blue heavens. He did not seem to hear the whistling arrows, but there was a quivering of the young flesh, a closing of the veined eyelids. Then the arrows, no longer playing over the surface, pinioned first one arm, then another, until every limb was held fast with a dart and the blood flowed over him and clad him like a garment. The head drooped, the limbs no longer quivered. When the sun neared the western horizon, the body of the captain of the first imperial cohort hung lifelessly on the merciless cords that had bound it to the olive tree; till, with rude jokes on this sharp shooting, the cords were cut, and the Christian martyr fell heavily to the ground in his own blood.

No crowds had gathered within the boundary of the grove of Adonis during all those terrible hours of suffering from pain, thirst, languor. No eye had looked into his with a holy courage or a gleam of Christian hope. But, from the windows of an apartment in the palace, every arrow had been watched; every movement of the suffering martyr had been noted. When he was cut down, like a slaughtered victim, from the olive tree, this Christian woman, Irene (whose husband, Castulus, had only a short time before suffered death for his faith in Christ), hastened to secure the relics of the martyr who had thus triumphed before her eyes. Money could win many favors, even from the imperial guards; and Irene drew from her widow's income what was needed to have the body of Sebastian brought to her own apartments under the cover of the darkness. After a few moments spent in careful examination of the seemingly lifeless figure before him, the surgeon, a Christian, turned to Irene, saying: "Madam, your charge is likely to be, the nursing of the martyr back to life. He not only lives, but not one mortal wound has been inflicted. The only danger now is from loss of blood."

Irene heard this unexpected decision with an exclamation of

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pious joy and gratitude. When the news of Sebastian's arrest and sentence had spread from the palace all over Rome, the Christians had said to each other: "How can we spare Sebastian? Who, like him, can reanimate the courage of the timid, and even inspire those strong in the faith with a more sublime desire to suffer for Christ!" When, therefore, like a word spoken under the breath, it was whispered from Christian to Christian: "Sebastian still lives!" the joy and gratitude of Irene was echoed by every heart and every lip. How carefully was the reviving consciousness guarded from any shock; how prudently, too, was he at first allowed to remember that he had survived his martyrdom! For the joy they knew, was all for themselves. When consciousness did return to the faithful martyr of Christ, how cruel seemed the disappointment! To have suffered for Christ, yet not to have entered into His glory, was hard indeed for Sebastian. "At least," said he, "I have earned the privilege to speak boldly for Christ. Nurse me well, good Irene, that I may, all the sooner, give my second witness to the faith I am no longer bound to conceal." Nor was his sacrifice long deferred. His wounds had only closed, when Sebastian heard one day the well-known step of the emperor descending the imperial stairway, surrounded by his guards. Throwing over his loose garments a piece of drapery at hand, he suddenly unbolted a door, well-known to him, opening upon the stairway.

"Maximian!" solemnly called out a deep, hollow voice.

"Who art thou who makest so free with thy emperor's name?" shouted Maximian; and, looking up, he saw the pale face and lacerated figure of Sebastian, as of one risen from the dead, directly before him. Terror—all the blind superstition of the pagan and of the barbarian, for a moment mastered the tyrant, and Sebastian continued: "Maximian! I have come to accuse thee, before the one living God, and Jesus Christ, his Son, and before thy fellow-men, of all thy injustices and cruelties to the

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people of God, and to the followers of his Christ. For these, and thine own foul crimes, the punishment of God shall soon overtake thee, and thou shalt die the death of the violent unless thou turn thy hand from the slaughter of his people. Repent, then, while there is time, and acknowledge that Crucified One, whom thou persecutest, as thy Lord!"

The trumpets had ceased to play while these words, spoken with an awful distinctness, echoed up and down the grand stairway. It was, indeed, a voice from the sepulchre; for every one supposed Sebastian to have been dead many days. The emperor was the first to recover from this stupor of supernatural awe. Flaming with the white heat of his anger, like iron in the hands of the smith, he called out: "Ho! bring him to me. This time, I will see my work done. Two of you fellows with clubs, come here. Make a clean job of it; but beat the life out of him in my sight!" There was a dull sound of heavy clubs on a human skull; then a fall, and the soul of the martyr was already before his smiling Judge, to receive the two crowns won by his two victorious confessions of Christ. "Throw the carcass, with plenty of weights, into the *Cloaca;* there to rot among the filth of Rome, and be the food of vermin," and, this order given, the trumpets blared as before, and the emperor moved on.

That night, Lucina, another Christian widow in Rome, who had given her husband and only son as martyrs for Christ, was favored with a vision. She saw the *Cloaca Maxima*, the great sewer of Rome, with all its horrid deposits of filth, suddenly illuminated with a celestial light, and Sebastian stood before her, radiant with the joy of heaven, and with an immortal beauty. With one hand he pointed to the sewer, its gaping mouth showing corruption; with the other pointed to that Via Appia, along which stood already the tombs of so many of God's saints. Lucina awoke, and lost no time in communicating to the other Christians the knowledge thus given to her concerning the relics

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of the martyr. They were soon recovered and deposited on the Via Appia, where the church of Saint Sebastian was afterwards built.

The martyrdom of Saint Sebastian has been a favorite subject with artists. His arrows are always put into his hand when he stands among other saints. When his martyrdom is represented, he is bound to an olive tree, or to a pillar of the imperial palace. The archers are seen scattered over the court or the grove, in their gay, savage costumes; with their painted quivers and feathered arrows, shooting at the martyr as unconcernedly as if at a target. Perugino has thus painted Sebastian, bound to a pillar, before the arrows have pierced his flesh, and while he is looking up to heaven with all the rapture of a martyr's enthusiastic love for Christ. Above is seen Jesus Christ in glory, looking down benignly on the martyr, and giving him a benediction with two fingers of the right hand; while angels seem to hover over him as a protection from all the darts of the evil one, who might seek to tempt him in the hour of triumph. It is a vision that might well give a look of rapture to a Christian face.

Sodoma has painted Sebastian bound to an olive tree. In the distance, is the Palatine hill. The archers are running here and there, as if enjoying their pastime. Some are bending their bows to take aim at the helpless figure before them. The arrows have transfixed the youthful neck, pinioned the youthful arms and limbs. There is anguish in that quivering flesh; there is a keen dread of those whistling arrows; but the face is turned to heaven with such a look of faith, of constancy, and of love! And, lo! an angel appears, winging its swift flight from heaven, and bearing on his hands the crown of the Christian martyr.

In 1870 the Papal Zouaves, who had stood forth before the Christian world as the defenders of Jesus Christ in the person of his Vicar at Rome, were disbanded at the word of Pius IX. Obedient to the pontiff whom they had so faithfully served,

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whom they so enthusiastically loved, all took to their distant homes the devotion which had animated them during their privations in the Eternal City. The Holy Father was still surrounded by his enemies, and he had preferred to stand like the lamb in the shambles, or as the sheep before his shearers, to drawing the swords ready to leap from their scabbards for his defense. What could be done? Without noise or parade, these zouaves, scattered all over Europe, and some in America, united themselves under the patronage of Saint Sebastian, in order to be ready, when called for, or permitted, to go to the defense of the pope, to the defense of the Church and of Christianity. It is in the *League of Saint Sebastian* that the Christian youth of to-day find themselves enrolled under the banner of the Cross; find themselves true knights and Christian gentlemen.

The League of Saint Sebastian is a proof, that so long as Christian faith and Christian love are in the world, Christian chivalry is in the world also; and, so long as there is a priest to read the office of Saint Sebastian on the 20th of January, and to celebrate mass in his honor, so long will there be Christian knights worthy to bear testimony to that faith for which Sebastian, the noble tribune and captain of the first cohort of imperial Rome, so joyfully endured two martyrdoms and won two eternal crowns, in the year 288 after Christ.



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SS. PAUL AND ANTHONY.

"IF these bloody persecutions go on, as they now do under Decius, there will soon be an end of the Christians; for those who are not tortured to death will lose their virtue and then their faith."

"There is a promise, Maurus, that should keep us from ever speaking as if Christianity could die out of the world, or even thinking that it could do so."

"You are still young, Paul. Live a few years, with this persecution, more wicked even than it is cruel, raging around you, and you will speak and feel as I do. Why, Paul, they are not satisfied to cover a human being with honey and then lay him under a broiling sun, to be stung to death by wasps and bees and gnats; but they tempt him to sin in ways that only the demons of the pit of hell would stoop to invent." And Maurus went on to relate to Paul the details of a persecution which men still blush to think of. And all this was taking place, not only in Rome and Asia Minor, but in Egypt, and at Lower Thebes, where Paul lived. At the time of which we are writing, in the year of Christ 250, Paul was twenty-two years old. Both his parents died when he was only fifteen years of age; but not before Paul had been well instructed in the faith. From his very childhood he had been mild and modest, given to the study of Greek and

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Egyptian learning, and looking forward to happy days in the old city of his birth. But as Maurus went on with the story of the martyrs—especially those who were made to suffer the most frightful temptations, so that one actually bit off his own tongue and spat it in the face of his tempter, in order to preserve his virtue—he saw Paul's face changing, and becoming, every moment, more grave, more solemn.

At last Paul said: "You have sheltered me from these awful dangers, my good friend Maurus, these many months. I could see death coming, and any torture coming with it; but who knows whether the temptation might not be too strong for me? I know, too, that Claudius, my brother-in-law, would not mind seeing me taken up as a Christian, could he get hold of my estates. I will save him this temptation, and I will save myself from temptations also. I will fly from the wicked city and the dwellings of men. Claudius can take to himself such of my possessions as I cannot give to the poor; I shall not need them."

"But where will you go?" asked Maurus, in wonder.

"Wherever God leads me," replied Paul. "Do not try to follow me; and, above all, as you love me, keep my secret. I shall go where I can pray for you, my friend, and for all who cannot fly from the wickedness of men."

That very night, while Maurus and his household slept, Paul fled from Thebes and took the wildest path he could find into the desert. The grand pyramids, with their sphinxes, stood out against the deep blue of the Egyptian sky with its glowing stars, as he found himself, on the second night, far away from men and their miseries. But he went on and on, until he came to the low mountains on the edge of the great desert. Here he found caves. He knew they were the very ones he had so often heard of, where the money coiners, of Queen Cleopatra's time, hid themselves from men in order to smelt the gold and silver ore, and stamp it with the image of this beautiful but unhappy queen.

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He chose one of the caves for his home, saying to himself: "Here I will smelt the ore of my imperfect virtue in the fire of God's love, and on the pure gold shall be stamped his image and his alone. I will put the world out of my mind, out of my memory. I will think no more of men nor of their concerns, but of God. I will think no more of time, of its comforts or discomforts, but of eternity; its everlasting joys or everlasting pains!" Near his cave he saw a palm-tree and a clear spring of water. "Behold!" said Paul, "here is provided all that I need while I live! The fruit of the palm will nourish this body; the clear spring will slake my thirst; the leaves of the palm will give me raiment. What more can I wish for?" So it was in this very spot that Paul knelt to pour out his gratitude to God who had brought him out of the snares of the world. "I have escaped," he sang, "as a bird from the snare of the fowler."

It was now evening, and he bent down the lowest branch of the palm tree and plucked a few dates for his supper. Then he held his hand in the spring and scooped up the cool water, and drank it with thanksgiving. Just at that moment a raven alighted on his wrist, bearing in its strong beak half a loaf of bread, which it held toward Paul with a wise look. "See!" exclaimed Paul, "the same God who rained manna upon the desert for the children of Israel, sends bread to me by a raven!" and Paul took the bread and ate with a glad heart, for he knew that it was bread from heaven, showing that God accepted his sacrifice of the world. And thus it was, day by day. The palm tree gave him its few dates, the spring its fresh water, the raven never failed to bring to him the half loaf of miraculous bread; and when his clothing failed, he found a way of sewing the large, strong leaves of the palm into a garment, which clad him from head to foot.

But while Paul thus gave himself up to the thought of God and a holy conversation with heaven, a child was born at Coma, in Upper Egypt, who was one day to find this Paul who had hidden

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himself even from the eyes of his friend Maurus. The name of this child was Anthony. His parents were Christians, and seeing the wickedness of the society around them, they said: "It is better that our son should know nothing more of books than we can teach him, than learn this terrible wickedness all around us." Thus it came about that our young Egyptian nobleman, Anthony, knew nothing of Greek literature or the learning of the worldly; neither could he speak any language but his own. The scriptures he knew by heart; and the mighty acts of the Bible saints filled his imagination. He could not get over the thought of the apostles, who had left everything for Christ. Going into a church one day he heard the words: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor; and come, follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Anthony was eighteen years old when this happened. Both his parents had died six months before, leaving to him and to a younger sister a large fortune. When he heard these words he went home to his sister, saying: "How is it that we dare to keep such great possessions, when our Lord blessed the poor and told men the danger of being rich? Let us make over to our city what will free us forever from taxes, and after this, whatever we do not need ourselves, let us give to the poor."

His sister knew her brother's virtue too well not to agree with him, and everything was done as Anthony said. A few days after this, and when he was again in church, the words of our Lord, "Take no thought for the morrow," were heard by Anthony as distinctly as if an angel had spoken to him. He went again to his house, saying to his pious sister: "Why do we serve God by halves? Let us give ourselves wholly to him. As for me, I would gladly sell all which we have kept back and give it in alms. When this is done, I will go into some solitude where I can converse continually with God himself. And do you, my sister, join

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thyself to the pious virgins who serve God by prayer in the silence of their holy retreats."

His sister heard Anthony with joy, for she had often longed to join the society of these virgins, so everything was again done as her brother wished.

Anthony did not go into the far desert, but lived the life of a hermit in the neighborhood of Coma. His time was spent chiefly in prayer, in pious reading, and in weaving the mats and baskets of the country. He was never idle; and so ardent was his desire for perfection, that if he heard of any person who excelled in virtue, he sought him out and learned all he could from him. Just as one great man of science visits another, to learn about the wonders of the outer world, Anthony visited those who excelled in the science of virtue and in its practice. His food was nothing but bread and a little salt, he drank nothing but water, and his only bed was one of his own rush mats, or the bare floor. But after a time he felt himself too near his native village of Coma, and set out for some place where he could live alone with God. He was thirty-five years old, when he again set off for the wilderness. The wicked spirits did not fail to tempt him. They knew he had left all his worldly goods behind him, years before; but they also knew that the love of riches may keep a root in the heart long after it has seemed to give them up. So they laid silver plates in his way, and dropped bags of gold before him, to see if he would not stop to pick them up. But Anthony knew that he had no need of gold or of silver in the wilderness he was seeking. Paying no attention to these wiles of the enemy of all virtue, therefore, he wandered about until he found an old tomb, which had not been used for generations, and here he made his home.

From the time Anthony began in such earnest to serve God, the spirits of evil left him no ease or quiet. If he would fly from temptations of the world, he should still find temptations in the

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desert. One time, when he had resisted all these terrible temptations, without so much as yielding in thought, a ray of heavenly light suddenly broke in upon the gloom of his sepulchre. Anthony, knowing by this that our Lord was near him, cried out: "Where wast thou, my Lord and my Master? Why wast thou not here, from the beginning of my temptation, to ease my anguish?" And a voice answered: "Anthony, I was here the whole time; and since thou hast withstood so manfully, and hast not been worsted by the enemy of souls, I will be to thee always a a succor, and I will make thee famous everywhere."

At these words the hermit arose from the ground, cheered and strengthened, and gave himself up anew to prayer and thanksgiving.

When Anthony was fifty-five years old he was persuaded to found his first monastery. His favorite instruction to his monks was this: "Have eternity always in your minds; remember in the morning that you may never see the night; and at night that you may never see the morning; perform every action as if it were the last in your life." With such great motives did he urge them on to virtue; and by his own example continually drew them towards heaven.

During the persecution of Maximian, in 311, Anthony left his solitude, not only to minister to the confessors of Christ, who were working in the mines and to those in prison, but to win the crown of martyrdom for himself. He prayed to be allowed to witness to Christ with his blood; but Christ had other labors for Anthony. When the persecution ceased, he returned to his cell in the desert, and gave himself still less comfort than before. He put on, and wore to his death, the skin of a beast with the hair turned inside. He never bathed, and no one ever saw him unclothed until he was dead. And yet such crowds of Christians gathered around him, to see the miracles wrought by him in the name of Christ, that he hurried away from there to a wilder

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desert still, and came to the foot of a high mountain. Here he found a stream of clear, cold water. A few date-palms were the only trees. He tilled a patch of ground on one side of the mountain. No sooner, however, had he tilled it than the wild beasts tore it up; and no sooner did Anthony see this than he looked at the fierce beasts, shook his finger at them, as much as to say: "You must not tear up my field;" and the beasts obeyed him.

Sometime after this, he founded another monastery near the Nile; but for himself he chose to live in a cell far up on the mountains. He took one disciple with him, to entertain the visitors who flocked to him. Once Anthony saw, in a vision, the earth so covered with snares that it seemed impossible to set down his foot without falling into one; and he cried out trembling: "Who, O Lord, can escape them all?" And a voice, which Anthony knew well, answered him: "Humility, O Anthony!" It was by the wisdom learned in his own practice of virtue that Anthony taught his monks the way of perfection.

And now, Anthony is ninety years old. He has grown neither thin nor fat from fasting, and all who see him wonder at the vigor of his body and the purity of his soul; that soul, never troubled by crowds, and yet never over-joyful at being honored; always equal and serene; known, everywhere, as "the man of God."

But where is Paul, the young nobleman who fled from Thebes ninety years ago? Who, indeed, remembers him? Maurus died years ago. He had almost forgotten Paul by the time he died himself, and had ceased to wonder what had become of him. His brother-in-law, Claudius, is dead. aud his sister is dead; and their children, who came into possession of the property which Paul could not give to the poor, have hardly ever heard his name mentioned, so utterly has Paul died out of the memory of his fellow men.

But just at this time, when he has numbered almost one

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hundred and thirteen years, and the angel of death stands close at his side, God finds a way to make known to the whole world the virtues of his servant, Paul.

Anthony, now ninety years old, would seem to have outlived all temptations. But the spirits of evil, who are never weary, begin to whisper in his ear, that no one had served God so long as he, nor lived so long apart from men. But the night after these thoughts came into his mind, God reveals to him the still longer service of Paul in the desert; and, at the same time, commands Anthony to go in search of this man, still more perfect than himself.

With all the zeal of his youth Anthony sets forth, led by the spirit of holy obedience. After walking two days and nights, he sees a light in a cave, goes up to it and begs admittance, at the rude door, by repeated knocks. At length Paul, convinced that this is the guest he has been expecting, opens the door with a smile, calls Anthony by name, and they embrace each other with a holy affection. Paul asks Anthony if idolatry still reigns in the world, and under the same palm tree which sheltered Paul ninety years before, and beside the same spring, they converse together of the Church of God. Suddenly the raven appears, holding in his beak—not this time half a loaf, but—a whole loaf of bread, and alights on Paul's arm.

"See," says Paul, "our good God has sent us a dinner. In this way have I received every day of my life in the desert, half a loaf of bread; now you are come to see me, Christ has doubled his portion for his servants."

Having given thanks to God, they sit down by the fountain again. But now arises a little contest between them as to which shall break the bread; Anthony saying that Paul is the elder and should do it, and Paul insisting that Anthony is his guest and should break the bread. At last they agree to break it together. Having eaten the bread, they drink water from the fountain and

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spend the night in prayer. When morning comes, Paul tells his guest that the time of his death is near, adding: "Go and fetch the cloak given you by Athanasius, the holy bishop of Alexandria, in which I desire you to wrap my body."

Anthony cannot conceal his surprise, for how should Paul know of his cloak? But whatever may be his reason for thus asking for the cloak, Anthony will not refuse it to him, but hurries off to his own cell to bring the cloak to Paul. Arriving among his own monks, he tells him all that has happened, and then sets out again for the far desert and the cave of Paul. Again and again he knocks at the rude door, but no smiling face appears, and he gently pushes it open. There is the aged Paul, kneeling on the bare rock of the cave, his thin hands stretched out in prayer. Full of joy, Anthony kneels beside him, but the silence—the silence which belongs only to death—startles him. He embraces Paul only to find him dead! Then, remembering that his friend wished to be buried in the cloak of Athanasius, he takes off Paul's robe of palm leaves, sewed together with its own strong fibres, to keep it as a holy relic, wraps the hermit in the cloak of the bishop of Alexandria, and carries the body from the cave. But now a new difficulty presents itself: how shall he dig a grave? As he stands, perplexed, two lions come quietly up and seem to mourn over Paul; then, tearing up the earth with their strong paws, dig a hole large enough for his body, and cover it with the earth, while Anthony is singing the hymns and psalms appointed by the Church at the burial of Christians. This done, he returns again to his monks, and states to them all the wonders which have been revealed to him in the desert. Paul died in the year of our Lord 342, in the one hundred and thirteenth year of his age and the ninetieth of his solitude. He is called *Saint Paul, the first hermit*, to distinguish him from all others of the name.

And Anthony, how long did he outlive Paul? In 356, he once

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more visited his monks and foretold his death, giving them his last instructions. In vain they tried to persuade him to remain among them. He hastened back to his solitude and to his faithful disciples, Macarius and Amathus, who had been with him the last fifteen years to serve him in his remote cell in his old age. There he soon after fell sick, and he said to his young monks: "Bury my body secretly in such a place;" adding: "In the day of the resurrection I shall receive it, incorruptible, from the hand of Christ." Then resting a little, he said: "Give one of my sheep skins and a cloak in which I lie, to the bishop, Athanasius, as a proof that I am in faith and communion with him, and give my other sheep skin to the bishop, Serapion; but keep for yourselves my sackcloth, for I indeed go the way of the fathers, as it is written. As to the rest, farewell, my children, Anthony is departing, and will be no longer with you."

Saying this he embraced them, then stretched out his feet and calmly ceased to breathe. And thus died the great Saint Anthony, who for a hundred years had lived amid the hot sands of Africa, and under the burning sun; and all this time. as has been said, "he possessed his soul in patience."

The feast of Saint Paul is celebrated on the 15th day of January, and that of Saint Anthony on the 17th of the same month. And while Saint Paul is called the first hermit, Saint Anthony is called the first abbot; as, under him, monks first lived together under a rule.



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SAINT JOHN THE ALMONER.

"HAVE you heard the good news, that Blessed John, the Almoner, is the new bishop of Alexandria?" said Demetrius to his friend, Petri.

"I have heard," replied Petri, "that John of Amathus, in Cyprus, has been appointed bishop of Alexandria, but I am not ready to call it good news. I do not like that title of *Almoner*. It bodes no good to the treasures of our opulent see. Having spent his own immense fortune, he comes to Alexandria to spend the revenues of the Church, I suppose."

"Ah, my good friend Petri, it is hard to convince you that the true wealth of the Church does not depend upon her revenues in silver and gold. We are apt to forget that our Lord cautions us against laying up *our treasures where moth and rust may corrupt, or where thieves break through and steal.*"

"You must pardon my bluntness, Demetrius, but I have no patience with those who make the squandering of one's substance on a set of worthless beggars a mark of perfection. Do not tempt me to say anything worse than I have said already. Good morning, Demetrius."

The friends gave each other the parting salutation, but Demetrius sighed as he watched Petri walking proudly down the street. Both were Christians; but, like too many in all Christian times, Petri had his predominant passion, and that passion was

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avarice. "Perhaps the example of the Blessed John may change his mind on this one subject," thought Demetrius; "for Petri is a sincere man, and would not lose heaven even for his money."

The fame of Blessed John, as he was called even then, had come before him to Alexandria; Demetrius, however, knew him personally. John was of a noble and very opulent family in the city of Amathus, on the southern coast of Cyprus, the most beautiful of all the beautiful islands in the Mediterranean. This charming island of Cyprus lay only a little east of north from Alexandria; so that a sail over the blue waters between these two points, was no unusual pleasure-trip among the rich citizens of Cyprus and Alexandria. Something which came to the ears of Demetrius concerning a young nobleman of Amathus, who gave immense revenues to the poor, made a deep impression upon his mind. In the course of his next visit to Cyprus he took pains to learn all that was known about this model of Christian virtue; among other things, the vision granted to this holy man while still young, which was told thus: One day when the youth was absorbed in prayer, a maiden of most gentle aspect, crowned with olive leaves and surrounded by a mild splendor, approached him, and stood as if expecting him to speak. The holy youth was greatly astonished, and said: "Who art thou, who comest to me during my hour of prayer?" The vision answered: "I am the eldest daughter of the great King. No one is more powerful with him than myself; for it was out of love for me that he became man, in order to redeem his brethren. Take me, then, for thy friend, and thou shalt never be without a friend in heaven." The youth understood the olive to signify *Mercy*, and he began, from that hour, to be so merciful, that even in the midst of worldly prosperities and domestic happiness, he was called the *Almoner*. Afterwards, when he had buried wife and children, and

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had no one to claim his time or his wealth, he devoted himself and his immense fortune to the service of the poor.

After hearing all this, Demetrius would not leave Amathus without seeing the nobleman; and, from this time, Blessed John, the Almoner, made the chief attraction of Cyprus to Demetrius. We can now understand his joy on hearing that his saintly friend had been sent to Alexandria as "the pastor and bishop of souls." We can also understand why he depended so much upon the example of Blessed John, to change the mind of his friend, Petri.

On the arrival of the new prelate, all Alexandria was astir to pay him due honor, and to learn his wishes in order to gratify them. At this time, the See of Alexandria stood next to that of Rome in dignity and in wealth, and all were anxious to show their delight at the appointment of John to the patriarchal chair. The first intimation of his wishes which he made to those who waited upon him was: "Go through the city of Alexandria and make a list of my masters."

Puzzled, as well as surprised, by this strange request, they asked him: "Who will presume to call himself the *master* of the Patriarch of Alexandria?"

Blessed John replied: "Those whom you call the poor are my lords and my masters. Let me have an exact list of all these who are to be found in your beautiful city. I have called them my lords; I may also call them my standing army; for they will help me to gain for you and for myself the kingdom of heaven."

The names of seven thousand five hundred poor persons were brought to him, with whose support he charged himself immediately, and furnished them with all things necessary. It was by an act so generous, that he prepared himself to receive, in its fullness, the grace of consecration. On the same day he published strict laws, by which all were commanded to use just weights and measures, in order to prevent the injustices so often practiced against the poor; while the officers and servants of his

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own household were forbidden to receive the least present from any one. "Let us be no respecter of persons," said the Blessed John. "There will be those under our roof, may it please God to grant, who will give us what no money can buy. Let us make sure of these gifts, which will assist, instead of hindering, our footsteps in the path of perfection."

There was no lack of halls or of porticoes in the city of Alexandria, where its bishop could receive his *masters*,—the poor and the oppressed. But he knew how often the most deserving shrink from the humiliation of presenting their needs to those who sit in marble courts. Before the church was a bench, where the poor and the wayfarers could find a shelter from the sun, and rest themselves under their burdens. On this bench sat the Patriarch of Alexandria, from morning until night, every Wednesday and Friday. To him flocked the necessitous and the afflicted of all sorts, and each one received, not only whatever temporal help could be given, but new courage to bear up under the ills of life. In the treasury of his cathedral he found eighty thousand pieces of gold. Without delay, this immense sum was distributed among the hospitals and monasteries; for it was at the monastery gate that the poor could ask alms without a blush. But if these charities excited the more fervent among the Christians of Alexandria, like Demetrius, to assist the bishop in his holy work, they excited others, among them Petri, to complain that the diocese was impoverished by such lavishness. One day, when in a very bad humor, Petri met his friend Demetrius, and his first salutation was: "I hope you have seen alms-giving enough since your *Almoner* appeared among us. We may all be thankful if we are left in quiet possession of our own houses, without giving them up the poor, and taking their hovels in return."

"Do not hurt your own soul by speaking in this way," said Demetrius. "It is not possible, my friend, that you can thus

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pervert the actions of our holy patriarch!" At this moment a poor man held out his hand to Petri for an alms.

"Take that!" exclaimed Petri, with anger; and picking up a small pebble threw it into the hand of the beggar.

"You will become a disciple of Mercy, like our holy patriarch himself," said Demetrius, as if speaking under an inspiration from heaven.

While this was going on, a group of poor people stood watching the rich citizens and their companion, who had received nothing but a stone. One of these destitute men, who heard the prophecy of Demetrius, said: "I will see if we cannot win an alms from this Petri." "Do not try it," said the others. "It is not the first time he has given, *instead of bread, a stone.* Only the other day he drove a poor man from his own gate with the stones from his walk." "Nevertheless I will try," said the first.

The next day he saw Petri, accompanied by a servant who carried a basket of rye bread, and he ran after him asking an alms. Petri looked round for a stone; but seeing none, caught one of the loaves from the basket to throw at the head of the beggar, with an indignant, "Take that!" The beggar ran triumphantly back to his companions, and showed them the loaf of bread which he had won from the rich Petri.

Two days after, Petri was seized with a malady which every one supposed mortal. Writhing under his pains, he was all at once frozen to the marrow of his bones with a vision of his own private judgment so near at hand. In one scale of the balance of divine justice he saw wicked spirits heaping, one upon another, his sins. Beside the other scale stood young men clad in white, with sad countenances; for they had nothing to put into it. Suddenly, one of these youths said to the others: "I now remember that we have a loaf of rye bread which he gave two days ago, under constraint, to God." In haste they put this loaf of bread into the empty scale, and, strange to say,

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the balances stood even! Then they turned to Petri and said: "Take care to multiply these rye loaves, or these dark spirits will seize thee one day!"

Upon this Petri came to himself, and, with sighs and tears, meditated upon his past life. "Alas!" he said at length, "if a single loaf of rye bread, which I threw at a poor man in a moment of anger, has such a merit, what might I not have earned by giving all my goods to the poor?" It pleased God to restore Petri to life and health. Going one day along the street clothed in costly apparel, he met a poor creature almost naked. The memory of his vision had not gone from his mind, and immediately Petri took off the costly decorations from his attire, and gave them to the destitute man. But without waiting for Petri to turn his back upon him, the poor man sold the rich ornaments and spent the money they brought. When Petri saw how much more the poor man cared for the gift than for the giver, he was so mortified that he could neither eat nor drink. "Has it, then, come to this," he said, "that the poor do not remember those who make them rich presents?" But that night, while Petri slept, he saw a man more glorious than the sun, who bore a cross upon his head, and he was clothed in the robe and jewels which Petri had given to the poor man. Then this most resplendent being spoke to Petri, saying: "Why wast thou vexed with that poor man, or why dost thou feel mortified? See how beauteously I am clad in thy garment! and I will give thee, in return for it. most precious graces; for *I was naked and thou didst cover me.*"

When Petri waked from this dream, his mind was wholly changed. From this time he sought ways in which to despoil himself for God's poor, while in his prayers he would sigh forth thus: "As the Lord liveth, I will not die until I, too, am one of his poor!" Thus was it proved how powerful was the example of Blessed John, the Almoner, in the city of Alexandria; and thus, too, was fulfilled the prediction of the good Demetrius.

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Let us now return to the Blessed John, who was always too much occupied with the wants of others to attend to his own. It came to the ears of Demetrius that the patriarch of the rich See of Alexandria had but a single blanket for his bed, and that a very mean one. He therefore bought a cover for the bishop's bed, which was suited to his rank, and sent it to him, begging him to accept it as a present. The bishop accepted the gift, and it was laid on his bed; but when he lay down to sleep under it, he thought: "Alas! how many of my *masters* are shivering with cold this night, whose sufferings could be relieved with the price of this cover!" And so strongly was his mind impressed by this thought, that, when morning came, he sold the coverlet and gave its price to the poor.

Demetrius, who was determined to keep watch over his coverlet, knew in a few hours that it had been sold. He therefore bought it again, and returned it to the bishop, at the same time begging him not to sell it. But no sooner had Demetrius left him, than the Blessed John sold his coverlet again, giving its price to the poor. And no sooner was it sold and paid for than Demetrius purchased it again, and carried it to the Blessed John, saying pleasantly: "We shall see which will be the last, you to sell, or or I to buy this coverlet." And the Blessed John replied: "We can despoil the rich in this manner without sin. By it we gain two things: the first is the salvation of our souls; the second is a most gracious remuneration for what we have given."

A poor man, in the dress of a pilgrim, came to Blessed John one day asking an alms. The saint called his steward and gave him eleven pieces of silver. Having received them, the man went out straightway, changed his dress, returned to the bishop, and again asked an alms. Again the Blessed John called his steward, and said to him: "Give this man six pieces of gold." When the money had been given to the beggar, the steward said to the saint: "Father, by your command this man has twice re-

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ceived alms at your hand this day; for he only changed his dress for the last visit." But the Blessed John did not appear to notice what his steward said. A few hours after, the same man presented himself before the bishop in a third dress, and, for the third time, asked an alms. This time the steward touched his master, saying: "Father, this is the same man who has already received alms from you twice this day." But the Blessed John only replied: "Give this man twelve pieces of silver; for who knows but our Lord Jesus Christ has come to try us, and know if he will first tire of asking, or we of giving."

On a certain day, when on his way to the church for a festival, he was met by a woman, who claimed his protection against the injustice of her brother-in-law. Some of the by-standers said to her: "Why do you insist upon speaking to the bishop now? It is unseemly. Wait until he returns from church." But the bishop, overhearing the rebuke, said: "Bring this good woman before me; for how can I hope that God will hear my prayers this morning if I put off listening to her petition?" And although every one was kept waiting, he would not stir from the place until her wrongs had been redressed.

A person whose necessities had been relieved privately by the Blessed John, expressed his gratitude with deep emotion. But the bishop cut him short by saying: "I have not yet spilled my blood for you, as Jesus Christ, my Master and my God, commands me to do."

Nicetus, the governor of Alexandria, persuaded the venerable patriarch to go with him to Constantinople, to visit the emperor, Phocas. On their way they touched at the island of Rhodes. Here Blessed John was admonished by Heaven of his approaching death; and he said to Nicetus: "You have invited me to visit an emperor of earth, but the King of Heaven calls me to himself." Turning, therefore, from Constantinople, they sailed for Cyprus, and here, at Amathus, his native city, he soon after died

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happily, in the year of our Lord 619, the sixty-fourth year of his age, and the tenth of his patriarchal dignity.

His feast is celebrated on the 23d of January, in the midst of the terrible cold of the winter season, as if to stir up our selfish hearts to some feeble imitation of his uncalculating charities.



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SAINT IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH.

THE mild Syrian winter still spared a few roses in the pleasant garden of Christian Antioch, and the sun lay warm on the flat roofs of the oriental city. Antioch was the home of the early Christians. The great apostles, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, had both labored there; and Saint John, apostle and evangelist, had there instructed the disciples of the Lord. At Antioch, therefore, were stored some of the choicest traditions of the young Church of Christ; and it was at Antioch, that the followers of the crucified one were first called by the dear and holy name of *Christians*. There Christians were found in great numbers, and were both loved and respected.

But among them all, none was so much beloved, none so much respected as their venerable bishop. Whenever he walked abroad or was seen on the streets, old and young, rich and poor, hastened to give him some mark of respect, or to get his blessing. Children hung upon his steps, took his hand with a timid fondness, or gently laid hold of his robe. It was on this mild day of the Syrian winter, when the roses still lingered in the gardens, and the sun lay warm on the flat roofs of the city, that the good bishop made his way slowly from his house into one of the principal streets, surrounded, as usual, by the children of his flock.

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"See!" said Reus, a young Antiochan, to Agathopodus, his companion: "Yonder walks our saintly bishop, Ignatius. Does he not deserve, also, that other name, *Theophorus*, given to him by the faithful? For, even at this distance, he has the air of one who bears the Lord Jesus in his heart; the very air of the priest who bears the Blessed Sacrament on his bosom."

"And have you not heard," said Agathopodus, "that when a child he looked on the face of the Lord Jesus, and keeps to this day, the blessed memory of that adorable countenance? They even say that he is the same, whom, as a child, our Lord took into his arms, setting him in the midst of his disciples, and saying: *Of such are the Kingdom of Heaven.* Afterwards he was a pupil, and, when he grew to manhood, a dear and intimate friend of Saint John the Evangelist; that beloved disciple who leaned on the breast of the Lord during the Last Supper. So great was his innocence when a youth, that he was once allowed to hear the angels sing. When he became bishop of Antioch, he caused the divine praises to be sung among us as he heard them sung by the angels; one choir of angels making heavenly responses to the other. Polycarp, the holy bishop of Smyrna, was the fellow disciple of our own bishop, Ignatius, in the school of Saint John; and a most tender affection is said to exist between them. Together they make two golden links, as I have heard my father say, between the first disciples of the Lord and those who, like ourselves, must feed our faith and our devotion upon the traditions which come to us by their holy lips."

"How I wish," said Reus, "that we could hear all this from his own mouth! Let us follow him, and it may be that an opportunity will be given to us to ask him about these things. It is never hard to approach him, and that benign face seems to invite the young to his side."

While the young men walked briskly in the same direction as Ignatius, they became aware of some extraordinary commotion

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in the usually quiet city of Antioch. News had just arrived by the imperial runners or heralds, that the emperor Trajan was returning from his victory over the Dacians and Scythians, and that he would stop at Antioch on his way towards Rome. Great was the excitement on every side. Men were proud of the victory gained in the name of the empire, and it was an honor to their city to receive the emperor on his return from so great a conquest. The whole populace was inspired at the idea of a triumphal procession; and nothing seemed to be thought of but the coming pageant.

But with all this bustle and pride of the citizens, was strangely mingled a supernatural exaltation in the minds of some, and a supernatural fear in the minds of others. For with the news of the victory came the imperial command to prepare sumptuous sacrifices, in honor of the god under whose protection his victory was supposed to have been gained. Many an old Christian, ripe in piety as well as in years, heard this with a pang of solicitude; for were there not numbers who now seemed strong, who would, under such temptations, be found weak in the love of Christ? Perhaps among their own children were those who had already begun to taste the sweets of ease and social happiness during the short peace, of fifteen months, since the former persecution; who had even begun to anticipate a share in the honors of the empire. But there were others, among those aged men, who heard the decree for *all to sacrifice to the gods*, with a secret gladness. To them it was the trumpet call to victory; and many who had sighed: "How long, O Lord, how long!" now saw the dawn of an eternal day of blessedness breaking upon them. Of this number was the holy bishop, Ignatius. During the former persecutions, when he had seen his faithful sheep falling around him, he had envied them the privilege of dying for Christ; and as year after year passed by and he was still uncalled for, he began to feel that he must have been counted unworthy

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of such heroic service. Now, however, when the command of Trajan came to Antioch by his swift-footed heralds, a sudden rapture took possession of Ignatius. The time of his departure had come, he could not doubt; and on that sunny winter's day, when the young Reus and Agathopodus followed him with such venerating looks and eager steps, he was already anticipating the joys of martyrdom more than others were anticipating the pageant and festivities of the emperor's triumph. Still, when the young men approached him, and were recognized by him as belonging to that fold whose sheep and whose lambs must ever be ready for sacrifice, Ignatius smiled upon them, and they both walked at his side like sons beside an honored father. The sudden excitement around them left no time to ask the questions that were in their minds; but there was something in the face and manner of the bishop that morning, something, too, in his very smile, which made them feel that they could follow him even to death.

On the 7th of January, of the year 107, Trajan entered the city of Antioch with true imperial magnificence; nor did he relent in his design to compel all the citizens to sacrifice to the gods in thanksgiving for his successes. The absence of the venerable bishop of Antioch was not to be overlooked; and when he was told that Ignatius had not only avoided the sacrifices, but had counselled his people to absent themselves altogether, the emperor's wrath was not to be appeased, and he called out: "Bring that obstinate old man before me! He shall learn what it means to defy the emperor of all the Romans."

When Ignatius heard, from those sent to arrest him, upon what ground he was accused, he delayed not a moment to accompany them, saying: "In truth, good friends, you could not have brought me a more pleasing message."

Trajan received him with a lowering countenance. As he stood meekly between his guards, the emperor rudely asked: "Who art

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thou, wicked demon, that durst transgress my commands and even persuade others to do so and thus perish?"

The hair of the aged saint was already white in the service of Christ; his figure had, for so many years, bowed before the altar, had, for so many years, stooped to the daily necessities of Christ's little ones, that it was slightly bent; but his voice was as clear as a silver bell ringing forth the morning hours, as he replied: "No one calls Theophorus a wicked demon."

"Who is Theophorus?" angrily called out Trajan.

"The saint answered with unruffled serenity: "He who carrieth Christ in his breast."

"And do not we carry the gods in our breasts to assist us against our enemies?" continued Trajan.

To which Ignatius boldly answered: "Oh, victorious emperor, thou errest in calling those gods, who are no better than devils. There is only one God, who made heaven and earth and all things that are in them; and one Jesus Christ his only Son, into whose kingdom I earnestly desire to be admitted."

Trajan asked: "Dost thou mean by Jesus Christ, him that was crucified under Pontius Pilate?"

"The very same," joyfully exclaimed Ignatius; "the very same who, by his death, crucified sin with its author, the devil; who, by his death, overcame the malice of the devils and has enabled those who carry him in their hearts to trample on the devils and on all their wicked works."

"Thou callest the gods of Rome devils. Thou sayest that those who carry Christ, the crucified one, in their hearts, trample on the devils. And thou sayest, also, that thou carryest this same Christ within thee," said Trajan, fixing a piercing look upon Ignatius.

"This do I say, O victorious emperor," said the holy bishop, returning the emperor's look with one of celestial radiance; "for has he not said: *I will dwell with them and walk in them.*"

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"Then," said the emperor, in a voice terrible with indignation, "then dost thou, Theophorus, trample on the gods of Rome in whose name I have won these victories. Write," continued he, turning to a scribe with a style in his hand ready to use it at the emperor's dictation. "write thus: It is our will that Ignatius, who saith that he carrieth the crucified man within himself, be bound and conducted to Rome, there to be devoured by wild beasts for the entertainment of the people."

On hearing his sentence, the holy martyr raised his eyes and his hands toward heaven, crying out with joy: "I thank thee, O Lord, for vouchsafing to honor me with this token of my perfect love for thee, and for permitting me to be bound with chains of iron, in imitation of thy apostle Paul, for thy sake." Then, as if he could no longer keep back the fervent wish of his heart, he prayed aloud in the presence of all the people, recommending to God, the Church of Christ. This done, he stretched forth his hands eagerly to receive the ignominious chains, and put forth his aged feet to receive the heavy fetters. This was soon over, and he walked from the presence of the emperor, accompanied by his guards, with as peaceful a countenance as if surrounded by his deacons and acolytes on a high festival day. Arriving at Seleucia, a sea-port sixteen miles from Antioch, he was put on board a vessel. This vessel, instead of going directly to Rome, was to coast along the southern and western shore of Asia Minor; which was done in order to have the terrible sentence, so rudely carried out, strike terror into the hearts of all the Christians along the coast.

But what has become of our young friends, Reus and Agathopodus, who were ready to go, even to death, with the holy bishop? There were several Christians in Antioch who resolved to follow him to Rome and see the end of the good man. Taking the direct road, they arrived in Rome many days before our saint. But Reus and Agathopodus were

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not satisfied to do this. They wished to accompany the martyr; to be near his person, to catch every word that fell from his lips. They resolved, therefore, to embark on the same vessel with Ignatius. How great was their joy and contentment when they found that Philo, a deacon, was on board the vessel also, and with the same pious intention! These devoted young men saw him guarded, night and day, by land and by sea, by ten soldiers, whom Ignatius likened to ten leopards; because the kinder he was to them the more they abused and insulted him.

But this long voyage served quite another purpose than the one which the emperor had in his mind. The very sight of Ignatius, as they stopped at the various seaports, inspired the Christians with a desire to suffer for Christ; and he thus confirmed all whom he saw, and all who heard of him, in the true faith. When they reached Smyrna, he was allowed to go again on shore. This gave him unexpected happiness, for there he would see his dear friend and fellow disciple, the blessed Polycarp, as every one called him. Polycarp received Ignatius with open arms; embraced and kissed him. The manacled hands of Ignatius did not allow him to return the embrace, but he kissed his friend with a joyful countenance.

"Would to God," exclaimed Polycarp, "that I, too, might be found worthy to suffer for this cause!"

"Doubt not, my brother!" affectionately answered his friend, "thy time will come; but for the present the Church has need of thee."

The Christians at Smyrna immediately flocked around the martyr of Christ. They kissed his chains, his poor worn garments. They knelt for his blesssing, and, as they received it, wept aloud. The soldiers, seeing that his presence only encouraged instead of frightening the Christians, were savage with disappointment. "Enough of this!" they called out, with horrible blasphemies; "come, old man, or we shall be too late for the

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games!" And with jeers and blows they wished to force him from his friends. But the holy fervor of his soul defeated their designs, for with an alacrity, which those only feel who go forward joyfully, he left the weeping Christians of Smyrna, his beloved brother in Christ, Polycarp, and hastened to the ship at a pace which his persecutors, even, did not wish to quicken. In all these scenes Reus and Agathopodus, with Philo the deacon, were his faithful companions, treasuring up every look, every gesture, every word of the saint; to give them in writing afterwards to entire Christendom.

They did not reach Rome until the 20th day of January, and learned that this was the last day of the games—the last day upon which the emperor would furnish to the refined people of Rome the entertainment of seeing their fellow-beings given as food to beasts of prey. No sooner had the soldiers who attended Ignatius heard this, than they urged him along the streets of the imperial city to the house of the prefect. They took with them the letter of the emperor, which would secure them immediate attention, as no time was to be lost. The order of the prefect was given without delay, and they once more set forth with their venerable prisoner toward the Coliseum, where the games were already going on for the day. But their wicked haste was equaled by his holy desire to suffer. Instead of pining under their harsh treatment or sinking under the fatigues of the voyage, the cheering prospect of a speedy death for Christ had improved his bodily condition. It was then with a clear eye, a ruddy though withered cheek, and a light step, that he walked through the mighty arches of heavy masonry which led into the arena of the Coliseum. In the rear were Reus, Philo the deacon, and Agathopodus, following as close to him as possible. But when they had wound along the dark passage-ways through walls of solid stone, and came to the heavy door opening into the arena, they were obliged to fall back. They soon found a stair-

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way leading to the first tier of benches for spectators. Here they could see and hear everything. Already the voices of the caged beasts sounded in their ears and filled them with a mortal terror, a sickness at the very soul. Already, too, they saw the thousands and thousands of human faces, ranged on benches, tier above tier, around the vast circle. Already they heard the hoarse shouts of a populace drunk with the blood of Christian victims, yet still calling for a sight of new horrors; and they hardly knew which was the most terrible, the roar of the lions, the snarls of the panthers, or the cries of the pagan multitude. But no sooner did Ignatius find himself standing in the midst of this vast Coliseum, in the midst of these infuriated human monsters, than a divine joy lighted up his aged countenance. Lifting up his hands and his voice he cried out: "Men and Romans! Know ye, this day, that it is not for any crime that I am placed here, but for the glory of that God whom I worship, and because I am a Christian. I am the wheat of the Lord; and must be ground by the teeth of beasts to be made the pure bread of Christ." As he uttered these words, the roar of the mighty African lions shook the very Coliseum and filled even the impatient multitude with awe. One instant only was allowed in which to take breath, when, through the sanded floor rose two secret doors, and two enraged lions bounded into the centre of the amphitheatre. The majestic creatures, fierce with hunger, longing for freedom, shook their awful manes, lashed their tails; and then, catching sight of their prey, both sprang upon him at once. There was a gushing forth of two bright rivers of martyr-blood, and the body of Ignatius, the Christian, sank lifeless on the sands of the Coliseum. Before the spectators had time to recover from the fiendish excitement of seeing an old man given to the lions, not only the flesh, but the bones of the sacrificed servant of God, had been crushed by the teeth of the hungry beasts. When the space

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was needed for a new victim, only a few large bones told where Ignatius, the venerable bishop of Antioch, had given a martyr's witness to the truth of the Christian faith.

"That was quickly done," said one of the guards, who had brought him from Antioch: "there is not much left of the old man!" But close beside him stood three who knew the value of those few aged bones. With that love and veneration for the relics of a martyr which was one of the marks of a fervent Christian in those days, they carefully noted everything. Before a sacrilegious hand had been laid upon them, the contents of a heavy purse had secured them as a rich treasure for the Church, and as an object of veneration for the faithful during all times. At the earliest possible moment, Reus, Philo the deacon, and Agathopodus, those three faithful witnesses, and the other friends of Ignatius, returned to Antioch, carrying with them, as trophies of a Christian's victory, the relics of the aged martyr. In every city at which they halted, these bones were received with pious enthusiasm, until they were deposited, with great honor, under the altar of his own church, and among his own faithful people.

While on his way to Rome, Ignatius wrote several letters to the churches of Syria. In these letters are found the most fervent exhortations to be faithful to the truth of Christ as given by the apostles. "Use our Eucharist: for the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ is one, and the cup is one in the unity of his blood. There is one altar as there is one bishop, that you may do all things according to God. Be lovers of unity; shun all divisions. Keep your body holy as the temple of God. Be ye imitators of Jesus Christ as he is of the Father."

The feast of Saint Ignatius is kept on the 1st day of February, by the Church, which, after more than one thousand seven hundred years, does not forget his holy service nor his holy triumph. On this day is shown, also, in a rich reliquary of silver, on the

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high altar of the church of Saint Clement, in Rome, a piece of one of the large bones left by the hungry lions on the sanded floor of the Coliseum, or Flavian Amphitheatre, hardly a stone's throw from the ancient church of Saint Clement.



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SAINT BRIDGET.

ONE saint is almost sure to be the cause of another. The atmosphere of certain hills or valleys produces flowers peculiar to these places. Their seeds drop into the soil which protects them for another year, and so on for generations. Precisely in this way, the example of a saint, the moral and religious atmosphere which surrounds him, brings forth hidden graces of character in others, until they are perfected to an heroic degree.

Patrick not only preached to the Irish people, but he lived among them a life so holy, and so grand in its holiness, that almost every one who came near him caught the spirit of sanctity One of his ways of encouraging people to become saints, especially young women of noble birth, was to inspire them with a love of virginity; of a religious life. He saw, by an instinct of holiness, how naturally the young girl aspires to a life of chastity, of a life given to heaven and to God. To know with what wonderful success he appealed to this noble desire for perfection, we have only to read the life of Saint Patrick and the lives of those who came under his influence. The same may be said of his immediate disciples. They believed that there was no shorter, no surer way to sanctity, than a life dedicated to God in a state of chastity.

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Saint Patrick was still living, still preaching and building churches, ordaining priests, consecrating bishops, performing miracles, when, in 436, a little daughter was born to an Irish lord, named Duptace, and called Bridget in baptism. She was given in charge to a Christian woman who took care to instruct her in the love of God and in the love of virginity. In her father's house she rendered herself beloved by every one on account of her amiability, her peaceable, obedient disposition; while a love for the poor seemed to have been born with her. With these virtues she possessed a singular beauty; regularity of features, with a charming expression which filled every one with delight. Her father, seeing this, determined not only to make a noble marriage for his daughter, but to choose carefully from the noble youths who sought her in marriage. What was his disappointment to find that she turned with the same indifference from all, however desirable as to riches or station or virtues. As to Bridget herself, she soon discovered that her beauty was the cause of so many flattering attentions, and instead of being gratified by this, of cherishing her beauty, she asked God, in all the simplicity of her heart, to take this beauty from her, and thus put an end to the solicitations of her suitors and of her father. Her prayer was granted; and the loss of an eye, either by disease or an accident, so changed her face that those who had admired her turned away in disgust or in pity; while her father was only too happy to find her disposed to lead a religious life.

It was Saint Mel, one of the early disciples of Saint Patrick, who gave the veil to Bridget; and as she came before him, the holy bishop saw a column of fire standing above her head. But the maiden, wholly unconscious of this manifestation of her sanctity, bent her head to kiss the altar step with a humility so perfect, that the dry wood of the step turned green and a branch shot forth, while at the same time the eye she had lost was restored and all her beauty came back to her. It was as if our

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Lord had said to her: "For love of me you were not only willing to forego the love of mortals, but you were willing to sacrifice your natural beauty to prevent any expression of this love. Now, when your choice is made, I will not suffer one who loves me to continue this sacrifice; but you shall be as beautiful in your body as in your soul; and even the beauty of your body shall be for the glory of God—a proof of the love felt for you by that divine spouse whom you have chosen above all the sons of men.

Three young friends followed Bridget in the choice of a religious life, nor did they wait for any person to endow or build a convent for them. In the neighborhood, eight miles from Dublin, were giant oaks, preserved, no doubt, by the Druids, who held them in superstitious reverence. In one of these, Bridget and her three friends made cells, and this sylvan convent in the heart of the oak was called *Kill-Dara*, or Cells of the Oak. If we had not seen or heard descriptions of the giant cedars of the Yo Semite Valley in California, we might be inclined to smile at the idea of three women living in the trunk of an oak. But now we have seen in our own day what must forever make us feel that the cedars of the Yo Semite, with their crowds of wondering and admiring visitors, may well envy the oaks of Ulster. There is not a more charming picture in all the lives of the saints, than that of these four noble born virgins taking up lives of prayer in a house made solely by God; which, having itself for a roof, needed neither doors nor windows, nor any convenience whatever, to commend itself to its possessors. The birds of song that lived, built their nests and reared their young among the branches of the great oak, helped them to sing the praises of God. The rivulet which gushed from the hillside and made the moss green on the roots of the great oak, joined its voice to their hymns in honor of the divine perfections. The slender forest flowers assisted their meditations on the love of God, and their delicate

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stems seemed to bend with them in supplication at the hours of prayer. The shy squirrels, that made their warm nests in the hollows of the giant oak and laid up their stock of winter's food from its acorns, were not afraid of the gentle virgins who lived among them as sisters, and their bushy tails brushed the coarse habits of these recluses more gently than if they had been the velvet and ermine robes of princesses in the world. And from all these living things of the forest, the holy maidens themselves learned the lesson of a most generous confidence in the providence of him who had called them to his service.

The same charm which this life has for us, fourteen hundred years after, seems to have been felt, at that very time, by the maidens of Ulster; and not only of Ulster, but of the whole island of Erin. For Kill-Dara, or Kildare, as it is now known, became a nursery of sanctity; and around the cells-of-the-oak sprang up modest retreats of holy poverty, where elect souls could keep pace with Bridget and her companions on the way to heaven. Not only this, but holy women were transplanted from this nursery, who, like young oaks, bore within them the true spirit of Kill-Dare, and convents arose in every part of Ireland, which claimed Bridget as their mother. So numerous were these convents, that a great part of the life of Saint Bridget was passed in watching over them; while at every visit to her convents, others sprang up, as if under her very footsteps.

To live at the same time with Patrick was indeed a grace; but to listen to him was another privilege granted to Saint Bridget. We are told that Saint Patrick once preached three days and three nights, and each day did not seem longer than an hour to those who heard him. Bridget was among them, but we are told that she fell asleep while Patrick preached. It may be that some were scandalized, for they wished to waken her; but Patrick would not allow it. When she waked, however, he asked her what she saw as she slept. And she said: "I saw fair synods

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and white oxen and white corn-fields; behind them black oxen, and spotted oxen after these. I saw afterward sheep and pigs, and dogs and wolves fighting among themselves. Afterwards I saw two stones, one little and the other big. A drop was shed on each of them. The little stone increased at the "drop," and silvery sparks burst from it. The large stone withered, moreover." And Patrick explained her vision as relating to the two sons of Eochaidh, whom he had raised from death. One of his sons had believed, while the other steeled his heart even against his father's testimony.

The miracles of Saint Bridget have caused her to be named "the wonder worker;" and it was by the sign of the cross that she wrought most of them. Two lepers came to the saint to ask her prayers for their healing. Praying to God for them, she made the sign of the cross over a little water, and then told the lepers to bathe each other in the water. The first, having been bathed and finding himself cured, was so overjoyed at the recovery of health and so afraid of losing it again, that he declined to bathe his companion in return. In punishment for this ingratitude and this selfishness, he saw himself immediately covered with his old leprosy, while his companion was perfectly cured by the prayer, alone, of Bridget. A blind girl, named Daria, asked the saint to bless her eyes; and with the blessing she recovered her sight. But no sooner was the light of the natural sun perceived by her eyes, than another and a higher light illumined her soul. She perceived that the eyes of her body only distracted her soul from the contemplation of heaven; and she returned to her benefactress to ask her to obtain for her eyes their former blindness. At this same instant, the eyes which had been opened by the prayers of Saint Bridget were again closed by them. Another girl of twelve years, dumb from her birth, was led by her mother to Saint Bridget. The saint took the hand of the little girl and asked her, in a very distinct voice, if she truly wished

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for the love of Jesus Christ, to keep a perpetual virginity. The mother immediately began to tell Saint Bridget that it was impossible for the child to speak. But Bridget replied: "Nevertheless, I shall not allow her to go until she answers me." Then the mute tongue was loosened, and the girl promised Saint Bridget, by the grace of God, to remain a virgin all the days of her life; and from that time she spoke freely. A wicked woman uttered a grievous calumny against a holy bishop. It was reported to Bridget, and the woman not only repeated the calumny to her, but to Saint Patrick himself. Horrified at this boldness, Bridget made over the calumniator's mouth the sign of the cross, and her tongue became so swollen that she could not speak. Then, turning to the infant which the woman carried in her arms, Bridget made over its mouth the same sign, and the infant spoke, contradicting the wicked calumny of the mother.

The sign of the cross seemed the one means by which her wonders were wrought, of which we give still another instance. The daughter of a gentleman of the neighborhood, fled secretly from the house of her father on the very day of her intended nuptials, in order to enter one of Saint Bridget's convents. The father, having heard where his daughter had gone, mounted his horse, followed by a good escort, in order to take his daughter home by force. But Saint Bridget saw him coming, and making the sign of the cross on the ground before her gate, the horses became motionless as statues as well as the father himself. This father was indeed human and capable of anger; but he was a Christian; and becoming convinced of his error by this miracle, allowed his daughter to remain in the holy state she had chosen; manifestly by the will of God.

Having now lived to her eighty-seventh year, Saint Bridget had a warning of her death; which she no sooner received, than she communicated it to a good girl whom she had raised in the fear and love of God; telling her the very day on which she would

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be called to enjoy the presence of that celestial spouse to whom she had been united all her life by desire. Her first monastery, her beloved Kill-Dara, was the place of her death, which took place on the first day of February, 523. Her body was buried at Kill-Dara, and her nuns lighted on her shrine a perpetual flame in her honor, called the Fire of Saint Bridget; so that their convent was sometimes called the *House of Fire.* This fire was never allowed to go out until the year 1220, when it was extinguished by the order of the archbishop of Dublin. It is this fire, which the poet Moore refers to in one of his Irish Melodies:

"*Like the bright lamp that shone in Killdare's holy fane,*
And burned through long ages of darkness and storm,
Is the heart that afflictions have come o'er in vain,
Whose spirit outlives them, unfading and warm!
Erin! oh Erin! thus bright through the tears
Of a long night of bondage thy spirit appears."

In a shrine thus loved and honored, the relics of Saint Bridget remained until 835, when the Danes invaded and burned Kildare. The case which contained these precious relics, was then borne in all haste to the monastery of Down-Patrick, where the body of Patrick reposed. A few years later, in 850, the same danger threatening the relics of Saint Columba,on the Isle of Iona, they, also, were transported to Down-Patrick; and thus the three great saints of Ireland rested in the same tomb. They were found by Bishop Malachy, in the year 1186, in a triple vault, and solemnly transferred to the cathedral of the same city. The impious Grey, under Henry VIII., destroyed the church which contained this triple shrine and cast the relics to the wind. The head of Saint Bridget, however, had been given to a church in Neustadt, Austria, and thus escaped the profanation.

There is still a round tower and the ruins of a church said to have been built by her, and which certainly dates to the sixth cen-

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tury. Pictures of Saint Bridget we have not. But there are eighteen parishes in Ireland bearing the name of *Kilbride*, or Saint Bridget's church. And there is another way in which the undying love of the women of Ireland for their patroness is still shown. "Unable!" as Montalembert says, "by persecution and misery, to raise monuments of stone in her honor, they testify their unshaken devotion by giving her name to their daughters. Noble and touching homage of a race, always unfortunate yet always faithful."

Among the little girls who used to come to the studio in Saint Joseph's Cottage, was one who had all the marks of gentle Irish blood. The figure was slender to extreme delicacy, and the hands and feet kept the same exquisite symmetry. The face was a long oval, like those seen in the Madonnas of Murillo, the Spaniard. The dark hair parted on a forehead not too high for beauty nor too low for thought. The thin nostrils and the sensitive lips, showed how fine was the fibre from which the thread had been spun, and the eyes were those so peculiar to the daughters of Erin—just the color of early field violets, with pupils which dilated at the least emotion, and shaded by those long, dark lashes, which leave such a lasting remembrance behind them; eyes full of the poetic melancholy which breathes through Erin's sweetest songs. I remember well when this little type of Celtic beauty came for the first time to the studio. Her shrinking figure and downcast eyes did not express shyness so much as sensibility; and when I asked her to tell me her Christian name, she looked me full in the eyes and said with a gentle serenity, "Bridget."

Most of the girls in the class had been in the habit of calling out this name at the top of the voice, and with no endearing accent, impatiently claiming service and attention. They were too well bred to laugh at the giving of a name under any circumstances; but, had the little new-comer given her's in a coarse

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voice, or in a smothered voice, I think they might have smiled. As it was, they did not even exchange glances, but leaned over their drawing-books with a look of the most delightful admiration for the new pupil. For myself, I could not keep the tears from springing to my eyes, for never had I heard so melodious a confession of faith. Always, after that, when she had drawn remarkably well, I took pains to call her by her Christian name, Bridget. It was my way of praising her; and my praise was well rewarded, by the lifting of those violet eyes as a response to the caress in my voice.

I have always hoped that she would join the train of Saint Bridget, the Virgin of Ulster and Abbess of Kill-Dara; for the world will never prize, as it deserves, a modesty so courageous, a sensibility so enduring. She belongs to the spiritual daughter of Saint Mel and Saint Patrick, who fled from the world to keep undimmed in her heart the image of her Lord, and whose virtues grew apace under the shadow of the great Celtic oak, beside the stream which made the moss green on its roots, and which gave shelter among its branches to shy squirrels as well as the birds of song. In the shelter of the cloister, little Bridget's name will be pronounced with veneration, and it will be to her a title of nobility in the order of God's people and in the household of faith.

The feast of Saint Bridget has always been kept on the 1st day of February.



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cilla, kissing her cheek; "you have been consecrated indeed to your Divine Spouse from your very birth; and, young as you are, I do not fear for you, since you put your confidence in One who never allows those 'who trust in him to be confounded.' "

The next morning saw the officers of the consul, Quintianus, at the gates of the palace where Agatha had passed her peaceful girlhood. As Priscilla and her husband had anticipated, neither of them was called for; only the young maiden, Agatha. The holy joy which the Communion of the early matin hour had given to her face, had not faded from it when her parents saw her in the hands of the officers of the empire. Some foreknowledge may have been given to her of the terrors of her coming conflict; for as soon as she was out of the presence of her parents she began to pray and to weep; supplicating the grace of God in her great necessity. Again and again she repeated this prayer, with tears: "Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of all things, thou knowest the one desire of my heart. Take me wholly for thy possession. I am thine own sheep; make me worthy to overcome the wicked one!" It was thus that she was brought before Quintianus. Supposing that the fear of death alone could thus afflict her, he Catana immediately [illegible] her that she had only to offer a noble virgins who walk in celestial [illegible] happy. "You are

It was in the year 251 after Christ. Decius, [illegible] le an origin," con- having killed his predecessor, Philip, could [illegible] vith tears. Merely Blood-shedding there must be; and the sight [illegible] ot in all Sicily would make every Roman forget how Philip died. [illegible] self," that sailed in such beauty along the Mediterranean, brought the news to Catana; brought it to the consul, Quintianus.

There must have been many beautiful maidens in Sicily—many among its cottages and in the palaces of its nobles; but when the edict came from Rome, Quintianus had long had his wicked eye upon one more beautiful than all the other maidens of Sicily; one, too, who would possess vast wealth. This maiden,

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certain," said . "God
ay be spared to us!" she continued, rais-
aven.
oes not think of himself," said Priscilla; "he
anus wants nothing of him but his riches and his
ter." And Priscilla folded Agatha in her arms with many
tears.

"Tell my father," replied Agatha, solemnly, "that Quintianus may get possession of his wealth, his castles, and his revenues; but that the Bridegroom to whom his daughter has been espoused from her birth, will never permit her to fall into the hands of any mortal, much less into the power of a wicked pagan persecutor!"

"You speak like a true Christian maiden, my child," said Pris-

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cilla, kissing her cheek; "you have been consecrated indeed to your Divine Spouse from your very birth; and, young as you are, I do not fear for you, since you put your confidence in One who never allows those 'who trust in him to be confounded.' "

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"Is it you, O Roman consul of Sicily, who dares to say to a Christian maiden, '*Deny that you are a Christian*'?"

"Be careful, my little patrician, how you speak scornfully to a Roman consul. He may yet show the rods of the lictor.* I

* *Lictor*, a Roman officer who bore the axe and the *fasces*, or rods, as the ensigns of his office. His duty was to walk before the magistrates, and see that proper respect was paid to them. The lictors also apprehended and punished criminals.

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have promised you all the pleasures of your age and station, if you sacrifice to the gods; but withhold the one grain of incense, and there is no limit to the tortures which I promise to you as a reward for your audacity."

All the tears dried from her cheeks, all dejection disappeared from her face. The Lord, whose grace she had entreated along the streets of Catana, was at her side, and she answered: "My will is firmer than the solid earth under my feet, for it is founded upon Christ Jesus. Your words are like the idle wind; your promises are like a gust of rain; your threats are like the harmless roaring of a brook swollen by storms. Whatever you do, you can never shake the foundations of my faith."

Quintianus did not call for the torturers. "Lead this young woman to the house of Aphrodisia," commanded the consul. Then he said to Agatha, with a fierce sort of a smile: "We will see about this will of yours. There are many ways of breaking the wills of patricians, and even of Christians." And with a scornful laugh he waved his hand for the officers to lead Agatha away to the house of Aphrodisia. Now this Aphrodisia was a woman who led a wicked life; so wicked that she was a scandal even among pagans. She had, moreover, nine daughters, as wicked as herself; and it was to this house of sin that the Christian girl Agatha was to be led. No sooner, however, had she been taken from the presence of the tyrant, than she began to pray and to weep as before. She entered the house of Aphrodisia weeping and praying; every day and every night found her occupied in the same manner, yet with a sort of joy; for she knew that she would win the crown of martyrdom.

During thirty days, was this innocent and defenseless child left exposed to the infamous companionship of Aphrodisia and her nine daughters, who seemed determined not to give her a moment of repose. But at the end of thirty days, Aphrodisia said to Quintianus: "I might hope to soften a stone, or turn iron into

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lead; but I shall never succeed in turning the will and the affection of this maiden from the law of Christ." Quintianus, who would not condescend to talk with Aphrodisdia in public, turned haughtily to his attendants: "Send the guards to the house of Aphrodisia, and bring thence the young Christian girl, Agatha." When Agatha again stood before him, Quintianus hardened his face, as he had already hardened his heart, and said boldly: "Of what condition are you?" as if she had been a stranger.

"I am of noble condition, as you well know," replied Agatha, "but I glory only in being called the handmaid of Jesus Christ!"

"If you are of noble birth, why do you declare yourself to be a servant!" asked Quintianus contemptuously.

"Because the noblest sovereign is honored by his true service towards Jesus Christ," answered Agatha.

"Once more," said Quintianus, "I will allow you to choose between sacrifice to the gods and torture!"

"May your wife be like Venus, and yourself like Jupiter, before I sacrifice to any of your gods!" answered Agatha.

"Bring the rods, and beat her like a slave!" said Quintianus. Then speaking angrily to Agatha: "I warn you against saying injurious words to your judge." The attendants satisfied the letter of the consul's command, by giving Agatha a cutting blow with a rod, which drew blood. As the blood started, she said with composure; "It surprises me to see a wise man given up to so great a folly as to worship, like gods, persons to whom neither himself nor his wife are willing to be compared, and who regards himself as insulted if it is hinted that his conduct could ever be like theirs. If your gods are good, and worthy of honor, I have wished you well; but if you blame their conduct, your sentiments are the same as mine."

"What have I to do with your vain babble!" exclaimed Quintianus, with vexation. "Sacrifice to the gods, without any comments upon them, or you shall die in torment."

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"But," Agatha replied: "If you throw me to wild beasts, I have only to speak the name of Jesus, and they will become harmless. If you condemn me to the flames, the angels of God will shed over me a refreshing dew. If you deliver me to the torturers, the Holy Spirit will sustain me, and I shall be able to despise everything in your power to inflict upon me."

"Take her back to her dungeon," said Quintianus, in a surly voice. to the guards; for he was mortified to have all these things said to him in the presence of the spectators. The next day she was again ordered to appear before the consul, whose savage face showed that she could expect no mercy at his hands. "Deny your Christ, and adore the gods!" said Quintianus in a severe voice.

"I have but one answer to give you; that answer you heard, yesterday, with anger," replied Agatha.

"Stretch this perverse Christian on the rack!" shouted Quintianus to the executioners. They knew by the consul's face that morning, and by the quiet voice of the prisoner, that they had bloody work before them; and the rack was all ready for a share in it. With incredible swiftness the hands and feet were so bound as to leave the young maiden absolutely helpless. One moment more, and it seemed as if the demons of hell were in waiting to anticipate the commands of Quintianus. Now a torch was applied to her tender side; now a sharp iron hook tore her flesh into bleeding threads; now a turn of the rack wrenched every joint from its socket. But instead of groaning or lamenting, she turned her eyes on the tyrant with a bright smile, saying: "My joy, amid these torments, is like that of a person who hears the good news which he has long expected; who finds a treasure for which he has long searched. By the hands of your executioners, I must enter upon the glory of Christ's martyrs."

"You shall be satisfied with your torments, if I can satisfy you!"

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chuckled Quintianus, with the glee of a madman. "Cut off her breasts! Let your shears cut close!" he almost screamed between his teeth. The savage command was carried out to the letter. As both the severed breasts were held, bleeding, before his eyes, the young girl Agatha called to him from the rack: "O cruel and impious man, hast thou no shame, that thou hast cut from a woman the breasts, from which a woman, and that woman thine own mother, once gave thee nourishment?"

"Take her to her dungeon, and let no one dress her wounds or give her bread or water!" said the consul; and this was the last time that Quintianus looked upon the noble young virgin of Catana. She was taken back to her dungeon, and left to its hard floor, without solace or nourishment; but at midnight the door of the dungeon opened, and an aged man appeared before her. A child accompanied him, carrying a light and medicines. When this venerable man stood beside Agatha, he said in a cheerful voice: "Although Quintianus has made thee endure cruel torments, thou hast tormented him still more by thy words. Thy sufferings will be visited upon him. I saw thee under the torture, and have come not only to console and encourage your mind, but to heal your bodily wounds."

"Jesus is my Spouse. If it be his will, my wounds can be healed without the aid of physicians."

The venerable man then said to her: "My danghter, I am Peter, the apostle of the Lord. He has sent me to heal thee!" And while he spoke, a light more brilliant than noonday, seemed to radiate from the wax taper in the hand of the child. Agatha knelt at the feet of Saint Peter, and, as he made over her the sign of the cross, she found her wounds healed, and her breasts restored to her body. That same instant Saint Peter had vanished with the angelic child; but Agatha still knelt on her prison floor, pouring out her thanksgiving to him who had thus

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healed her through his holy apostle. Four days after this, Quintianus sent to the prison to know if Agatha was alive. When they brought him word that she "was not only alive, but miraculously healed of all her wounds," the tyrant fell into a rage, and ordered her to be rolled over live coals mixed with broken pot-sherds; which being done, she prayed to God in her prison: "Lord God, my Creator, thou hast protected me from my cradle; thou hast taken from me the love of the world; thou hast given me patience to suffer; receive, now, my soul into thy eternal paradise!" No sooner were these words spoken, than as if Jesus, her Spouse, could not resist her prayer, she fell sweetly asleep in the Lord, and angels received her soul, to lead it joyfully into his heavenly presence.

Thus, on the 5th day of February, in the year of our Lord 251, the virgin Agatha received the martyr's crown, To this present time the priests of God celebrate her glorious victory over the powers of the world on this day. The office of Saint Agatha, in the Breviary, contains an account of all the wonders related in this sketch. An American bishop thus wrote in his journal, a few years ago, while on his way to the Holy Land: "It is the 5th of February; and as I read the office of Saint Agatha, I see not only Sicily, but Catana, and even Mount Ætna, in the clear distance."

Let us now see what the saints do for their fellow mortals, in return for the help given to them by God in the victory of martyrdom. When the Christians saw Agatha breathe out her soul in peace, they made haste to remove the precious relics from the prison. They were busy in preparing it with sweet ointments for burial, when a young man, clothed in silk, entered her father's palace, attended by one hundred other young men of great beauty, and in princely attire; and none of them had ever been seen by the family of the virgin martyr, Agatha. Without speak-

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ing, the leader of this noble band approached the couch on which the precious relics had been laid, placed a marble tablet at her head, and, with his companions, disappeared. As soon as the persons in the room had recovered from their astonishment, they looked at the tablet, and found written thereon these words: "Remember the fervent desire of this holy one to secure the honor of God, the deliverance of her country." When the anniversary of her blessed death came around, it would seem that God intended to punish Sicily for the grievous persecutions which had gone on there. Mount Ætna was all in flames, and sent forth its streams of burning lava to destroy the beautiful cities of the region; but those who had seen the mysterious tablet, remembered that Saint Agatha, next to God, loved her country, and desired its conversion. Therefore, nothing doubtful, they took the silk veil of the young virgin martyr, and, bearing it with great honor before them, walked directly towards the stream of burning lava, as if to meet it; and lo! the stream of destruction was stayed, so that not only Catana, but the whole region around Catana and Mount Ætna, could not say enough in praise of Saint Agatha or of her powerful protection.

But what of Quintianus, the persecutor and the brutal tormentor of this courageous spouse of Christ? Eager to take possession of the riches which belonged to Agatha and her family, he rode towards their estates in a chariot drawn by two powerful horses. Suddenly the animals snorted, broke into a furious race along the highway, overturned and broke the chariot, without loosening it from their harness, and kicked Quintianus until he died under the strokes of their hoofs.

We may not live to see the martyrs and confessors of our day crowned with the honors of canonization; we may not live to see those who persecute the Church in her bishops and priests, her religious orders and laity, punished by the hand of divine justice;

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but future generations will see these rewards duly meted out, and by the same Hand which gave to Quintianus his ignoble death, and to Saint Agatha the immortal honors of a virgin and martyr.

Holy Saint Agatha, pray for us!



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THE FORTY MARTYRS.

HOW sharply the delicate crescent of the young moon stands out on the steel-blue of this winter-night sky! How the stars flash and sparkle and radiate on their distant thrones! Orion stands forth at the head of his celestial legion, his belt set thick with the jewels of heaven, and his sword marked on its dark blue field by five stars, each of which is brighter than the famed brand, Excalibur, of King Arthur, or the Damascus blade of the bravest knight in all Christendom.

The crisp snow, stretching in frozen plains as far as the eye can reach, glitters under those distant stars; its dazzling whiteness made whiter still by the reflections of leafless trees exquisitely pencilled on its unbroken surface, while the winding river has veiled every wave under a sheet of ice. The dark evergreens, and even the trunks of the great trees in the grove, have a strange, unnatural whiteness; for the unseen mists of the day froze as they clung to them in their fall, when the sun went down behind the horizon. Above, below, around, all tells of the piercing, inexorable cold of this bitter season, whose glories, even, strike terror into the hearts of benighted travelers. They who sit by cheerful firesides tell stories of awful sufferings by land and sea; of whole families perishing in some far off region or in some scattered

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village; of bold explorers who have yielded, at last, to the cruelty of the unbroken Arctic night, and have died in their ice-bound ships, while their fingers, stiffening in death, still held the pen which had recorded their sufferings.

Looking out on the mysterious beauty of the winter night, we are reminded, however, not only of Arctic explorers and of belated travelers on lonely roads where no homes dot the long miles of drifted snow. Our thoughts go back more than fifteen hundred years, to Sebaste, a town in the ancient province of Armenia in Asia, under whose wintry blasts even the hardy Roman soldier shivered, and drew close to the camp-fire. For it was under such a clear moon, and under such flashing stars, and on such unbroken ice and crisp snow, that forty brave soldiers of the famous "thundering legion" bore testimony to Christ, even unto death.

You have read again and again of martyrdoms by fire—by slow fire—like that of Saint Lawrence on his gridiron—by fire without flame, like the red-hot coals, over which Saint Pontian, of Spoleto, walked to Heaven; or by those fires of blazing faggots which men lighted with yells of fury and of hate, fires so hot that the very executioners died from breathing their scorching fumes. But cruelty is ingenious; and there was a Roman general, named Lysias, who had heard enough of these fires at which Christians smiled and passed through joyfully on their way to everlasting life; and he resolved to try another torture, slower, and less likely, he thought, to stir the imaginations of impetuous youth. For this reason, he said: "Not to the flames; but freeze the blood in the veins of these rash fellows, and see how many of them will refuse to sacrifice to the gods!"

It seems, in reading over acts of the martyrs, as if emperors were inspired, every little while, by the prince of evil to proclaim a universal sacrifice to the gods; and thus to try the temper of those hidden Christians to be found in every rank of the Roman empire. It was under some such wicked inspiration that

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the emperor, Licinius, commanded all his legions, through their generals, to sacrifice to the idols of pagan Rome. When the Twelfth Legion—or, the "thundering legion of Marcus Aurelius," as it was called, because of a miraculous rain and victory obtained by their prayers—heard of this order, given out with the intention of discovering all the good Christians in the army, and of frightening all the cowardly ones into apostasy, they knew the time had come to choose between the short favors of an earthly emperor and the eternal rewards of the heavenly King. Therefore, going bravely into the presence of the general, Lysias, forty of these brave men, who had faced death for the empire, acknowledged themselves to be Christians, declaring that nothing should ever tempt them to deny their holy faith.

Lysias did not wish to lose forty of his best soldiers; so he put on a kind face, saying: "You have never yet refused to follow your leaders, why then do you now consent to dishonor your fair fame as loyal soldiers of the empire? Besides, knowing now, as I do, that you are Christians, your obedience shall have a double reward."

To which the forty soldiers answered: "What has even the emperor of the Romans to give in exchange for our honor as true Christians?"

The eye of the proud pagan flashed, as he exclaimed: "Since you despise the rewards of the emperor you shall learn to respect his punishments." And he forthwith ordered them to be scourged with whips; a punishment so ignominious that it had been declared, ages before, that no power had a right to inflict it upon a Roman citizen, much less upon a Roman soldier. Saint Paul, claiming the right of a Roman citizen, appealed from this sentence to Cæsar himself, and we can imagine how a soldier of the "Twelfth Legion" would recoil with horror from the disgrace of the lash, even more than from its pain. But to the soldiers of Christ, there is no glory like the privilege of suffering dis-

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grace for his sake; and the lashes, so far from breaking their holy courage, only confirmed it; until, maddened by their serenity, the judge ordered their mangled sides to be torn with hooks; after which they were loaded with chains and thrust into dungeons.

For many days their stiff and undressed wounds had throbbed as they healed in their own blood, when Lysias, who had gone to Cæsarea, returned to Sebaste. His first thought was of his forty obstinate soldiers, who, he resolved, should yield to his will, cost what it might to subdue them. Calling them before him, he pretended to pity their sad plight, and made new promises of rewards from the emperor. But these holy soldiers, though disfigured by their wounds and weak with the loss of blood and their prison fare, had lost nothing of their exaltation of mind and purpose; and they cried out: "Cease to tempt us, powerful general as you are; for we despise your offers and prefer these wounds to the noblest command in the power of the Roman emperor to bestow."

Here was something which baffled even the strategy of the commander of the legion! Fired with a wicked determination, he would not allow these men to taunt him with his defeat from the midst of the flames, from which so many martyrs had smiled in their torment; but setting his teeth together, and making his heart harder than the nether millstone, he said, in a voice low in its terrible anger: "Take these men yonder; strip them to the skin, and lay them on the ice of the pond; there let them spend the night. Not to the flames, mind you, but freeze," and he hissed it between his clenched teeth, "freeze the blood in the veins of these rash fellows, and see how many of them will refuse to sacrifice to the gods!"

The command of Lysias was carried out to the letter. The wild March day had come to its close as they hurried them from the court to the large open pond outside the town; the twilight,

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still short, ended, and the evening star flashed in the clear sky. Soon too, the moon appeared; as sharp in its outline as if cut out of the cold steel-blue of the cloudless heavens. One by one, Orion and the Pleiades came forth in all their majesty, as the forty soldiers had watched them come forth, night after night, while they stood guard, in cuirass and helmet, on some frontier of the great empire; and, with the moon and stars, came the keen breath of the Armenian night. The frost which they had seen gather in glittering crystals under the winter moon on every spray of the larch, on every tip of the tall grass, now settled on their motionless limbs; forbidden as they were by the sentinels to stir, lest motion should cheat the still, biting night air of its prey; for these night hawks of a pagan general watched for the souls of their victims more than for their bodies. But while the terrible cold pierced through every limb, every joint, every nerve of the forty soldiers stretched on the glare ice, their tormentors lighted the camp fires on the shore, and prepared baths for those who, they believed, would yield to this new trial of Christian fidelity.

Midnight came; and even the hardy, well clad sentinels were chilled to the marrow of their bones, and looked eagerly for some sign of flinching from their motionless victims. At length, one of them saw a stiffening figure try to rise; he ran to it, raised the almost lifeless body in his strong arms, while another sentinel ran to help him with his burden to the shore. They assisted the paralyzed hand to make the sign of the apostate Christian and then carried him to the bath ready to receive him.

What was it that was stronger than the general Lysias, or the emperor Licinius? What was it that was stronger than the sight of the camp fires which had for hours leaped and flamed before him?

Far off on the hills, less than the gleam of the least star, there had shone before the eyes of the brave soldier of the legion, a light from some poor hut, some home. At first he shut his eyes,

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and then turned them towards the far heaven, beyond which, he knew, was waiting for him a crown brighter than any constellation flashing above him, and in which would be contained all the joys of heart, and mind, and soul, which the Christian soldier had ever desired in his moments of deepest devotion. But again and again the rush-light of the Armenian peasant's home drew his mind from God and the one Lord to whom he had promised fidelity; and he turned, not to the honors of the legion or the reward of emperors, but to the darling family which he had left in his Dacian home, under a sky as wintry as that under which he lay stiffening in the sleep of a frozen death; and, with a weak cry, he raised himself enough to attract the eye of the sentinel. The sign of apostasy had been made; and carried in the arms of his fellow soldiers, he was laid carefully in the bath; when, suddenly, the arms relaxed, the lower jaw fell, the eyes turned, then stood fixedly in their sockets; a look of horror and despair passed over the face of the apostate Christian and he was dead!

As he lay, lifeless, before the sentinels, and the look of horror and of despair froze on the face of the dead, one of the guards heard a sound as of voices from Heaven, over the glare ice of the pond on which lay thirty-nine of the forty soldiers of the Twelfth Legion. As he looked up at the sound of the voice, he saw forty angels, each with a crown, brighter than the stars, in his hand; but one of the angels had covered his face, weeping over his rejected crown. At this sight, the soldier of the Roman Cæsar exclaimed: "I too, am a Christian, and I will win thy crown, O, most noble and most beautiful angel!" And forthwith he stripped off his armor, of which, he had been so proud, laid by his sword and his belt, all his badges of honor, and took the place of the dead apostate on the glare ice under the pitiless Armenian sky.

In the morning, when the sun had followed in the track of the flushing hour of dawn, at the command of Lysias, a cart was

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sent to the pond, to take all the bodies, whether living or dead, and fling them onto a bonfire lighted on the shore. As the guards took the lifeless bodies, one after another, stark and straight as icicles and of a pallor which was even whiter than the rightful whiteness of death, they saw on each face a radiant smile; even on the face of him who had, at the eleventh hour, taken the place of the poor apostate. But the last, and the youngest, as all the chronicles say, a youth called Melito, was found alive. The executioners, pitying his youth, and thinking he might, if left to himself, choose to keep the life thus spared to him, were on the point of leaving him, when his mother, a woman of mean condition but rich in faith, and worthy to have her son a martyr, vehemently reproached the executioners for this mistaken kindness. "Ah, why do you thus deprive my son of his faithful companions? Why do you thus seek to take from him the reward of his holy fortitude, the recompense of his love?"

Then, taking him in her arms, frozen as he was in every limb, unable to move, scarcely breathing, while he turned his languishing eyes upon her, trying at the same time to make a sign with his hand for her comfort—she pressed him to her heart, her countenance full of a celestial courage and a divine hope, and said aloud to him: "Go, go, my son! go on to the end of this happy journey with thy companions; that thou mayest not be the last of them as they present themselves before God." And the courageous woman, breaking forth into a hymn of exultation and of triumph, laid him, with her own hands, beside his brother martyrs on the ignominious cart.

Thus it was, that the forty crowns were won in one night; and the Church, following the example of the angels, has crowned these soldiers before the world. The office composed to honor the "Forty Martyrs," is one song of jubilation:

"I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall be ever in my mouth!"

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"Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye just, and glory all ye right of heart!"

Such are the ejaculations into which she breaks forth at the remembrance of their trial and of their constancy. "After winter comes summer," and after the chill night of our northern March, come the soft breezes of April and the sweet buds of May; but there is no floweret laid upon the shrine of saint or of martyr more significant than the pendant icicle, hanging from the eaves of cottage or of palace on the 10th of March, in this cold, northern clime as well as among the hills of Sebaste in Asia.



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SAINT PATRICK.

LOOK, Dalreid! how bravely that ship is standing towards us from the sea. All her sails swelling before the wind; and as if these were not enough, the oars on each side are manned; grand fellows, all of them."

Dalreid looked, as Succat pointed, towards the ship which was sailing directly for the shore. But what had given the boy at his side so much pleasure, made the old herdsman shake with terror. "God save us, my young master," he groaned; then, leaving the flock to take care of itself, he laid hold of Succat, saying: "Let us fly! there may be time to escape them." But the wind blowing towards the shore, the strong men pulling at the oars, gave no time for flight beyond the shallow hiding places among the rocks. "Let us fight for our lives!" said Succat, seeing how little was gained by running. "Oh, my boy," groaned Dalreid, "They do not care to take our lives. All they want is to get prisoners; prisoners to be their slaves!" and with a shudder, Dalreid, still keeping his hold on Succat, plunged into the low bushes, their only hiding places. There was the possibility of being overlooked here; but they would be seen and overtaken, most certainly, if they attempted a longer flight. Their suspense was short. The ship was manned by the seven sons of Sectmaide, King of Britain, and their followers. Keen sighted, always on

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the lookout, they had noticed, before they were seen themselves, Dalreid and his young master, Succat, and had watched their flight; so that when they landed, swift-footed and strong as they were, they had only to swoop down upon their victims like birds of prey, and drag them to the ship; which to Dalreid, was worse than a grave.

The shore on which this took place was the northern shore of France, known as Armorica, whare Succat's father, Calphurnius, who was a *Decurio*, or officer in the Roman army commanding ten soldiers, had estates. The family was noble; and his mother, Conchessa, was a cousin of Saint Martin, that great bishop of Tours, who, while a soldier, had divided his cloak with a beggar. Perhaps there had been little of what we call luxury, in the life of this noble youth, but there had been everything which makes life happy; parents, brothers and sisters, a home of peace and of abundance, with such an offlook on the future as made the present all the more full of contentment. The youth had grown up with only one aim for this world, which was, to be worthy of his rank. How completely all his bright hopes had been overcast, Succat did not know himself, at this time. Long, very long after, he heard that his father, Calphurnius, was killed the very day that he was himself taken prisoner and that his two sisters, were also taken prisoners. God spared him these aggravations of his own misfortunes; perhaps in consideration of his youth. But from Conchessa? alas! nothing could be withheld from her. The full knowledge of her miseries, of her terrible bereavement, came upon her like a hurricane. The death of Calphurnius even, with all his claims upon her love and desolate as his death left her, was less hard to bear than the captivity of her children. Calphurnius had died under the weapons of his enemies, without the last consolation of his religion, it was true. But he had been, always, a good Christian, was prepared for judgment by the regular practice of his religion, and met death in the discharge of

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his duties as an officer and as the head of his family. For Calphurnius she had nothing to fear; but for her son, a mere youth, for her two young daughters, all in the hands of pagans—what had not her mother's heart to dread for the souls as well as the bodily safety of her children? It would be hard for the poet or painter, to represent the grief of Conchessa. Yet this mother, who was the cousin of a saint like Martin of Tours, must have known on whom to call in the day of her affliction; and when the news of these terrible calamities came to the ears of Saint Martin, as they must have come in due time, may we not believe that his prayers and tears, and the holy sacrifice which he offered with such fervor, were given, without stint and without measure, in behalf of the three children of his cousin, Conchessa, captives among pagans? Remembering, also, how prevailing were the prayers, the tears, the sacrifices of Saint Martin, may we not believe that they were like shields between these dear children and all the wickedness by which they were surrounded?

It was not a long passage from the shore of Armorica to the shore of Ireland, where the seven princes landed with all their slaves. During this expedition and the many which succeeded it, thousands were carried captives to Ireland from the northern coast of France, and then sold. Our Succat was sold to four men, who were slave-dealers, no doubt. In the end, however, one of them bought out the other three, and thus Succat had one master, whose name was Milcho, and he set Succat, the son of Calphurnius, the Roman decurion, in the midst of a desolate country to tend swine. The nights, as well as the days, were spent under the open sky, without shelter, without even so much as a sheepskin to protect him from the chill air or to give him a bed as he threw himself on the bare ground. Then, too, the heats of summer, the thirst, the food not only coarse but so sparingly given; the utter lack of companionship, the utter lack of kindness, and what a picture rises before us of this captive,

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this slave, in the hands of his masters! There was no one to remind him of his prayers; no one to remind him of God, of his loving providence; there was nothing to help him lift up his mind and thoughts, and to urge him to follow the example of so many confessors, so many martyrs, who had finished their course with joy, making no account of their sufferings.

In the happy years of life with his parents, Succat had been a child singularly favored by God. When taken to a priest named Gormias, who was blind, for baptism, and no water was at hand, the priest took the hands of the infant, made with them the sign of the cross over the ground and a spring gushed forth. With the water of this miraculous spring the little one was baptized; and the blind Gormias, having washed his eyes in it recovered sight. Again, when a flood put out the fire in the house where he was living with his nurse, so that no food could be cooked and the child cried with hunger, his nurse told him that he must wait until a fire could be kindled. With a smile like that of an angel on his wet cheeks, he dipped the five fingers of his right hand into the water, and the five drops which fell from his five fingers changed into sparks of fire and the fire glowed on the wet hearth and the water around them ceased rising. Another time, when the wood was too green to burn and his nurse complained that she had no dry faggots to kindle it with, he took the icicles which hung from the eaves and threw them onto the wood and long streams of fire broke out from them and the old nurse was consoled. Again, when he was watching the sheep and lambs with his little sister, she tripped as she ran to keep her flock in order and struck her head so that she fell senseless. Her brother raised her from the ground, made over her the sign of the cross, and she was not only restored to her senses, but the wound was healed, the white scar being all that remained to tell of the miracle. One day a wolf ran off with a sheep from his flock. His nurse reproached him for it.

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But the next day the wolf returned, bringing the sheep with him. Another day he heard a person say that he must kill one of his oxen because the creature was so wild and fierce. Succat asked to see the ox, and his one look tamed him so that he would follow Succat like a lamb. Yet no sooner was he a captive, than he seemed to lose all power over nature, or even over the hearts of his masters. But although no miracle saved him from captivity or softened the rigors of his servitude, Succat never lost his confidence in God; God who had created him; God who had redeemed him; God who was now sanctifying him in so extraordinary a manner; preparing him for extraordinary labors by extraordinary graces. Nor was this zeal of devotion for one month or one year only; but for six years, until the youth had become a man; and this, not while herding innocent sheep, symbols of the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world;" but while herding swine, into whose bodies our divine Lord once sent the demons cast out from one possessed. There was not one object of his care on which he could rest his eyes or his heart, or which could appeal to one sentiment, unless that of honorable fidelity to his trust. Yet, during all this time he had not asked, complainingly, why he had been created, if this was to be his occupation for life; or why he had such hardships while others were living in ease. A strange joy upheld his soul in the midst of his toils, his loneliness, his obedience to a master who could never win his esteem. From the time he was put to this menial service, he had been lifted above the usual necessities of the young; and while tending his herds, he enjoyed the companionship of angels by the exercise of unceasing prayer.

But what is the voice which Succat hears in his sleep on the bare ground, with the sky for a roof? During all these six years he had served his master, Milcho, with all simplicity of heart, without ever thinking that Milcho, king of North Dalaraida, should have special compassion upon him for any reason what-

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ever, nor had he ever thought of escaping. In his dreams he had seen the faces he loved so well, but had waked to find himself a captive, a herder of swine, without one thought of repining. And now a voice comes to him in his sleep, saying: "Thou dost fast well, and thou shalt now go to thy country." And again as he slept, the same voice was heard, saying: "Behold thy ship is ready." And all at once a light seemed to break in upon his mind, and a confidence in some guiding hand which had been laid upon him a thousand times more powerfully than the hands of his captors on the shore of Armorica. There was no breach of trust, now, in leaving his swine and making his way in the direction which the voice he had heard so distinctly had indicated. He must find his way to the seacoast; but it was not with the feeling of being a stranger that he took up his staff for his long journey. He had learned the language of the country, he had acquired its peculiar ways and habits, and no one would be likely to suspect him of being a runaway slave. Accustomed to hardships, his feet were as light as his heart, when, at the end of a long day's walk over paths rather than roads, he found a shelter and a few hours sleep under some overhanging rock or shaggy hawthorn; and he waked with the first pale streak of dawn, to speed with a gay step over the shortening distance between him and the ship which, the voice had said, was in waiting for him. Two hundred miles brought him to the port for which he had started; and there, taking in its cargo, was indeed a ship, bound, too, for Armorica. To go to its master, to ask for a passage, was the first impulse, without considering that he had no money to pay for his passage or skill as a sailor to work. The master and sailors wanted no such person on board, and told him so without any hesitation. Their gruff refusal was not to be mistaken, and Succat turned away from the ship sorely disappointed. But there was a habit which he had contracted during his long captivity which he did not forget. This was the habit of prayer;

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the habit of putting all his affairs, all his necessities, into the hands of God. Therefore, when he turned away from the ship, instead of giving himself up to despondency and blaming the master or sailors, he lifted his heart to Him who had protected him amid so many dangers, and had finally inspired him to make his way toward his own country. Before going to the ship he had stopped at the door of a cottage and asked for food; and the kindness with which it had been given to him encouraged him to return to it, since they would not receive him on board the ship. As he walked he prayed; and as he prayed and while still walking, he heard the sailors calling to him. One was even trying to overtake him and when he turned back they said to him, "Come, we will take you in good faith; be as good friends with us as you may wish;" and from that moment the soul of the young man was in peace.

The voyage lasted but three days when they landed; yet for twenty days, we are told, the ship's crew, with Succat, wandered about in a country devastated by pirates, who had carried off the inhabitants for slaves, without being able to obtain the food necessary to sustain life. At last the captain entreated Succat to "call upon his God" for the aid they needed. The captain and his crew were pagans, and, no doubt, in the course of the voyage, and their wanderings in the desert place, Succat had spoken of the power of God, the one true and living God, to sustain the creatures he had made. When the captain made this request, Succat prayed in all confidence, and forthwith a herd of swine ran before them, and so near that they easily caught all they needed for food; a miracle which those rude men did not deny, for they praised the God of Succat, and honored Succat himself for having been heard by this mighty Being. After a while they came across some wild honey which they were all preparing to eat, when one of the sailors remarked that honey was offered to

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their gods; which Succat no sooner heard than he refused the honey, much as he needed the refreshment.

But this painful journey, like all other things in this world, came to an end, and Succat was once more with his mother and his family and their relatives. If it would be difficult to describe the sorrows of the widowed Conchessa during the more than six years of bereavement which she had endured, it would be impossible to describe her joy on seeing again this beloved son and to find him worthy of her affection; worthy to receive from God marks of especial favor. Nor was Conchessa alone in this joy. All his relatives, all the friends of his honored father, united in welcoming him to his country, and were already planning for him the most honorable positions. Strange to say, no sooner did Succat find himself in his own country, among his own family, than he was sensible of a love, a deep, supernatural love for the country and for the people he had left. He had lived among them as a slave; but all the while he knew how high above them he had been raised by his Christian faith. What influence could the word of a slave have had upon his pagan master or his household? But now he was free, and an unexpected yearning sprang up in his soul for the conversion of those benighted people. Perhaps, too, this supernatural compassion was increased by contrasting the condition of these pagans, flourishing as they were, with the condition of a Christian community, even when this community had suffered great afflictions and were the victims of great wrongs. While all these thoughts were stirring silently in his mind, a vision came to Succat in the night, which had for him all the authority of that voice from heaven, which had bade him leave Ireland and return to his own country. An angel stood before Succat, clad, not in the shining garments in which Succat had seen him at other times, but in the dress worn by the master of Succat, and by others of rank. This angel, who was named Victor, bore with him

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innumerable letters, and as he presented one to Succat, he saw written thereon: "The voice of the Irish!" And while he read this letter, he heard many voices, chiming in the same chorus: "Holy youth, we intreat you to come and walk among us."

Succat read no more. He had read enough to know that it was the will of God that he should return to the people among whom he had lived as a slave, to be their guide in the way of salvation; and to know this to be the will of God, was to have it his will also. His course was plain. This divine call implied a divine preparation for his work. If he was to teach others, he must himself be taught. And now came to mind his holy kinsman, Martin, bishop of Tours. He would go to him and learn the divine science of instructing a nation in the Christian faith and how to practice it. From this moment the entreaties of friends, even of his mother, to remain among them, fell upon deaf ears. He had tasted the sweets of domestic happiness long enough to know the sacrifice he was making and to merit its reward. Without delay he hastened to the city of Tours, presented himself before the bishop, his kinsman, told him the story of his captivity, which Martin must have listened to with a sympathy known only to such great souls; to the story of his flight at the call of an angel; to his safe arrival on his native shore and among his own family, and finally, of this new call to an arduous mission among a heathen people, for the successful performance of which he had been prepared so mysteriously. His course was as plain to the bishop as to himself. Succat was in his twenty-second year, when he was released from captivity, which was in 410. He remained with Saint Martin four years, and was instructed in science and doctrine, At the end of four years, he received from Saint Martin the ecclesiastical tonsure; which was, to have the crown of his head shaved; and this hair was never again to be allowed to grow. But with this turning of his mind, of his whole intellect to heavenly wisdom, he turned his heart

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from the world altogether to God. He abandoned the cares and the pleasures of life, and made a resolution to abstain always from flesh meat. From Tours and from its holy bishop, Saint Martin, Succat went to Auxerre, and to another saint, Germanus The story of such a life as that of Martin or of Germanus, reads like something outside the world; or better still, as if God possessed this world and governed it, as few people, now-a-days, are disposed to acknowledge. If we do not acknowedge this, however, it will be impossible for us to understand these lives, so wonderful, so attractive by their beauty and their heroism as well as by their sanctity. This Germanus had once been governor of Armorica, and his noble birth, great learning and at length his extraordinary graces and correspondence with these graces, fitted him to be one of the civilizers of Northern Europe, and the founder, directly or indirectly, of some of its most famous schools. It was under this master that Succat studied theology and canon law; and was thus fitted to be a spiritual prince and lawgiver as well as priest. His life with Saint Germanus was rich in everything that would fit him for his great mission, in everything which would prepare him for a place among the friends of God; while it confirmed him in all the pious practices to which he had accustomed himself in the simplicity of his heart, during his grievous captivity. For, if Succat, the son of Calphurnius the Roman decurion, while a slave and a keeper of swine, had kept his mind fixed on God during the night watches and under the bleak skies of winter, the holy bishop of Auxerre found ways to keep his eyes from slumber during long nights which he spent altogether in prayer. While, after three nights of prayer, he performed wonderful works, converting souls, enlightening unbelievers, curing the sick, relieving distress of all sorts; and Succat thanked God for having the example of Saint Germanus before him to encourage him to persevere in the holy habit of his youth and of his adversity. The fruit of this holy

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habit he was not slow to reap; for it came to him in the security with which he walked in the way of perfection, and in the light of heavenly wisdom which was continually shed over his mind. And so it came to pass that even under the teaching of the holy and learned bishop of Auxerre, Succat felt himself called to Rome, the centre of Catholic unity, and to the Pope of Rome, the father of all the faithful and the source of authority for all Christian teachers. The resolution once taken, he made no delay, but made his journey to Rome and was presented to Pope Celestine, who was a saint as well as Saint Martin and Saint Germanus. How easy for one saint to read the heart of another! Pope Celestine received cordially the student of ecclesiastical learning; but he saw something deeper than a love for learning in that earnest face, in those eyes which had seen angels like most familiar friends, and whose ears had heard not only the voice of angels, but the voice of Him who said: "I am he who gave his life for thee." Pope Celestine heard Succat's story, and he did not doubt, any more than Succat himself, that God had called him to be a teacher of life to the Irish people. And seeing, clearly, that such a teacher should take with him the highest authority in the power of the Church to bestow, Celestine saw fit to ordain Succat, priest, by his own hand and afterwards to consecrate him bishop. But this was not all. As Saul, when called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, was to be known as Paul, so Pope Celestine set his seal on the ministry of Succat by giving him a new name, Patricius; or, as we say, Patrick; the name by which the Apostle of Ireland is known and loved and venerated, all over the world.

Besides this new name given with the very chrism of consecration, the zeal of Pope Celestine to furnish this new missionary with every possible aid for his work, was shown by his generosity in giving him relics—relics of the saints—as if he would secure for Patrick the influence of these friends of man, so powerful

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before the throne of God. We are not told the precise form in which these relics were given; but we know that in the time of Saint Gregory the Great, one hundred years after, relics were not, as is now very general, particles of the bones of a saint. When Theodolinda, queen of the Lombards, a woman who had done good service for the Church, sent to Rome by the Abbot John for portions of the bodies of the saints for relics, Saint Gregory did not feel at liberty to grant the request; but told him to take oil from the lamps burned before the shrines or tombs of the saints, and that this oil should have the efficacy of the bone of a saint. Very likely it was by a relic of this sort, not by the actual bones, that Pope Celestine strengthened the heart and the hands of Patrick; which may well recall to us what is said, in the Acts of the Apostles, of the zeal of the people to bring their sick within Peter's shadow who were thus healed. In Catholic countries, relics are considered most precious ornaments for the altar. On great feasts, these relics, in their reliquaries, are set on the high altar for the veneration of the people; very often instead of the flowers, so generally in use among ourselves; and from Pope Celestine's successors, as well as from Pope Celestine himself, we have examples of the confidence felt throughout those early ages in the virtue of relics.

The time had now come for Patrick to respond to the "voice of the Irish," which had come to him years before. There had been nothing hurried, nothing superficial in his preparation; but now that these preparations had been made, the soul of Patrick turned to Ireland, and to its people. There is nothing said of leave-takings, or visits to his family. One desire alone burned in his soul. This was to bring the land of his captivity into the freedom of Christ. The same short sail brought him again to the Irish coast, but he saw it surrounded by demons, who were bent upon keeping him from the island. The sign of the cross, by which he had wrought such wonders as a child, dispelled these

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evil spirits; but although he landed safely on a strand near the present town of Wicklow, the spirits seemed to have entered into the heart of the chieftain at the place, named Nathi; for he received them in a way which decided Patrick to go farther north, near Leinster, and still nearer to his old master, Milcho. Here he went on shore with his companions, and here they were found by a swine-herd, who took them to be thieves and ran and told as much to his master, Dichu, who forthwith set his dog on them. But when Dichu came near to Patrick and looked in his face, he became gentle; and faith, the "gift of God," came into his heart, and he was baptized by Patrick; thus becoming Patrick's first convert in Ireland, and always his most faithful friend. It was Dichu who kept Patrick's boat while he went to pay a visit to his old master, Milcho. Full thirty years had gone by since the vision which had urged Patrick to fly to the seacoast. Yet the country of Dalaraida had changed little in that time, so that Patrick could easily make his way. But when he came in sight of Milcho's house, he saw it in flames. This poor pagan could not imagine the visit of a former slave to his master as anything than a visit of revenge; and believing that Succat, now Patrick, had come to visit him and his household with destruction, he set fire to everything he possessed, and threw himself into the flames. Patrick predicted that none of Milcho's children would succeed him; but an honor greater than that of a petty prince awaited them. His son Gnasacht became Bishop Granard, and two of his daughters became nuns in a monastery which sprang up near their home.

Patrick had arrived in Ireland in the autumn of the year 432. After his visit to Milcho, he returned to his convert, Dichu, and spent the winter with him, preaching in the surrounding country with wonderful success; preaching not only by words but by example. If he taught them to pray, he himself excelled all in prayers. If he taught them mortification, he was the first to give

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an example; for even the bitter cold of winter could not prevent his passing the night in the frozen rivers, while he preached by day upon the hills. Each night he sang a hundred psalms to adore the King of angels. His bed was a stone, and a rock his pillow. For a garment he wore only wet sackcloth, and would never allow his body to be warm. And all this time the gift of miracles drew upon him the eyes of the Irish people, convincing them of his divine mission among them, and preparing them to receive his instructions. The Master who had said of his own miracles and those of his disciples, "greater miracles than these shall they do," gave to Patrick the power of healing; of making the lame walk, of curing lepers, of raising the dead to life. Among those favored was Rius, brother to Dichu. He was an aged man and had lost the use of his limbs. Patrick asked him if he would believe in Christ, if this same Christ would restore him to health? The aged man replied: "If thou canst, through Christ, perform on me such a miracle, forthwith I will believe in Him." Then Patrick prayed to Christ, laid his hands upon Rius in blessing, and the aged and helpless man stood once more on his feet with sound limbs and in all the vigor of manhood. But this was not all. After he had been baptized and had brought many to the fold of faith, Patrick asked his aged convert which he would prefer, to remain still on earth or depart immediately to God, who had shown such love to him, not only by healing his body but by saving his soul. Rius, without hesitation, said he would prefer to go to God; choosing heaven instead of earth. Patrick gave him forthwith all the sacraments for a happy death, and Rius, commending his soul to God, was taken to eternal rest.

The famous monastery known as the *Sabhall*, and pronounced Saul, was founded at this time. Sabhall means a barn; and very likely the first building was a barn, given up to Patrick until he could build a proper church and convent. At this time, too, a youth who became a saint, received the grace of conversion. As

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Patrick was on his way to Durlus, which is now called Bright, he saw a youth herding cattle. Something in the face of the youth told Patrick of a special grace waiting for him. So he stopped and preached the faith of Christ to the young herdsman, who heard the gospel story with perfect candor and was baptized. With the grace of faith came a vocation to the priesthood, and Patrick ordained Mochae as the first in the long line of Irish priests who have come down to our own day and are to be found in every corner of the world.

But these conversions, with so many others which have not been narrated to us in detail, did not strike at the roots of paganism in Ireland. Dalaraida was only the beginning of good things for the Celtic people. The Paschal days were approaching, and Patrick and his companions asked where they should be celebrated for the first time in Ireland? Their decision was, that no fitter place could be named than that where idolatry and druidism held its place most proudly; and this was at *Teamhair*, or Tara, and forthwith they bade Dichu farewell. On coming to the mouth of the river Boyne, Patrick left his boat in the care of a disciple named Lomman, and went forward by land. At the first place where he rested, a man named Seschnen received him and gave him lodging for the night. Benen, the son of his host, charmed with his guest, no sooner saw Patrick sleeping than he began to scatter flowers over him in token of his admiration. His parents reproved him; not, however, because they considered it undeserved, but for fear the boy would awaken their guest, who seemed fatigued with his journey. Patrick, however, heard the conversation and resolved to win this young soul to God. No time was lost in giving the necessary instructions. He was baptized, and thenceforth accompanied Patrick in his rounds as apostle to Ireland, and also followed closely in his steps in the way of sanctity. This young disciple is known to us, to-day, as Saint Benignus.

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But we must hasten to the first Paschal feast ever celebrated in Ireland, which is thus described by the ancient chroniclers:

"The famous Laeghaire was holding 'his court' at Tara when Saint Patrick arrived in that neighborhood. It was the time at which the great festival of the Gentiles, *i. e.*, the *Fes of Tara*, was usually celebrated. The king and princes and chieftains were wont to come to Laeghaire Mac Neill, at Tara, to celebrate this festival. The druids and magicians were also wont to come to prophesy to them. The fire of every hearth in Erin was usually extinguished on that night, and it was commanded by the king, that no fire should be lighted in Erin before the fire of Tara; and neither gold nor silver would be accepted from any one who would light it, but he should suffer death for it."

This was the law which Patrick had come to destroy, on this Easter Eve, or Holy Saturday, in the year 433. Like a great general who knows the strength of his own army, and of the enemy he has come to conquer, he does not wait to have this enemy fall upon him at unawares, but hastens to make the attack himself. Patrick chose this time to set at naught the religion of the Druids, and break the spell of idolatrous practices. At the very time when the fires of Erin were being extinguished, and when to kindle a fire or to strike a light was to bring on one's self certain death, Patrick, true to the beautiful ceremonial of Holy Saturday, lighted his Paschal fire; not in secret, but on the hill of Slane, where it illumined all the country of Tara. The king and his chieftains saw the light flashing over the plain and asked, in astonishment, who had thus boldly violated the king's command? The Druids, however, had kept a better watch than the king and his chieftains, and answered: "We know who has built this fire, which, unless extinguished before morning, will never be extinguished; while the man who kindled it will surpass kings and princes."

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"That is not how it shall be," exclaimed the king, in great indignation; "for we will not rest until we slay the man who lighted the fire." The Druids, full of their ideas of magic and incantations, entreated the king not to go to the place where the fire had been lighted, "lest," as they said, "you worship the man who lighted it; but stay outside and let him be called out to you, that he may know you to be a king, and himself a subject; and we will argue in your presence." So all the horses were unyoked from the chariots in front of the Ferta-fer-fec, and Patrick was "whispered out" to the king and his attendants. We do not hear that Patrick showed any fear of treachery or any fear whatsoever of the king; while a superstitious respect had come over him and his company for the man who had dared to disobey thus openly and intentionally, the commands of the sovereign; for they were told not to rise or show any sign of respect for this violator of a law of the land, "lest they should believe in him." When Patrick came out and saw the chariots and the horses, the prince and his noblemen and priests, he exclaimed, reciting the words of the psalmist of Israel: *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we call upon the name of the Lord our God.* The armed men were before him, and "the rims of their shields against their chins; and none of them rose up before him except one man alone, Eric, son of Dega." Grace touched the heart of this one man, or we may say rather, he was obedient to his grace. He rose up and saluted the venerable priest of God; and as a reward for this a still richer grace was in store; for afterwards he was known to all men as Bishop Eric, as Patrick had prophesied to him: *Some day your seat on earth shall be noble.*

But now followed one of those scenes which the weak in faith are always anxious to escape even when truth is sacrificed. The king questioned Patrick and Patrick questioned the king; then the Druid priests broke in upon the argument, and one Lochru "fiercely, enviously," contended with Patrick and denounced the

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dogmas which Patrick had disclosed to them. The king became angry and told his people to kill Patrick; when he suddenly saw the wicked Lochru punished by the hand of God for his horrible blasphemies. But when Patrick saw the pagans thus rising up against him, he cried out with a loud voice, in the words of the psalmist: *Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered, and let them that hate him flee from before his face.* And immediately darkness went over the sun, and the earth shook and trembled. They thought that the heavens had fallen on the earth. The horses started off frightened and the chariots were blown like stubble across the plain. The noblemen and priests who had come with the king, attacked each other in the darkness and finally all fled, so that only three remained, Laeghaire the king, his queen and one of his attendants. The king was overawed but not converted; and although he fell at Patrick's feet and seemed to be reconciled to him, the peace he promised was not sincere. For after a while he said to Patrick: "Come, O cleric, to Tara, that I may believe in thee before all the men of Erin;" while he had placed men in ambush at every pass between Ferta-fer-fec, where Patrick was, to Tara, in order to make sure of Patrick's death. But all this was made known to Patrick; so that although he started for Tara, instead of seeing the cleric and his seven companions, with Benignus, the men in ambush saw only eight wild deer flying past them on the mountain side and one fawn following them. After waiting until long after Patrick and his company should have fallen into the hands of his men, the king himself went to Tara, filled with shame; for he knew that Patrick had escaped the snares he had laid for him.

But the next day, which was Easter Sunday, while the king was feasting with his court yet pondering in his mind on all that had taken place so lately, Patrick appeared in their midst; for he said to himself: "I will go, so that my readiness may be manifest to the men of Erin; I will not make a candle under a bushel of my-

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self. I will see who will believe and who will not believe." This time, also, one only rose up to do him honor; and this was Dubthach Mac Ui-Lugair, the king's chief poet and the first in Tara who believed that day. The king then called Patrick to him that he might eat with him, and also required him to prophesy to him, and to do miracles; and the Druids were to work miracles also. But although the Druids, like the pagan magicians of other countries, worked wonders and marvels, the true miracles wrought by Patrick were still more wonderful, and at last convinced even Laeghaire Mac Neill that some power wrought by his hand which could not be despised with safety. He believed with the mind but not with the heart, and there is no doubt that he died a pagan not long after this meeting at Tara. Laeghaire had two brothers, Carbri and Conall. Patrick visited these brothers, to find Carbri like his brother Laeghaire; but Conall received him joyfully. He was willing to be instructed, and Patrick baptized him and gave him a special blessing, saying: "Thy brother's seed shall serve thy seed forever; and strive to exercise charity towards my successors after me; and the sons of thy sons, that they may be perpetual subjects to my sons of faith." And Conall measured off land for a church for God and Patrick, sixty feet in length, and Patrick said: "Whichsoever of your race diminishes this church shall not have a long reign, and he shall not prosper."

The grace of God wrought swiftly by the word of Patrick. On Holy Saturday the Paschal fire was kindled and the great dispute took place between Patrick and the Druids. On Easter Sunday he had appeared before the king at Tara. It is now Easter Wednesday, and Patrick is prepared to baptize his converts in the face of all Erin. Although the king and his Druids held aloof, the king's own brother was ready for baptism, also the king's poet and the young disciple, Fiacc, who was afterwards to receive such graces, and that Eric who was afterwards a bishop. These people of simple manners, unlearned in books, did not think it necessary

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to read many months in order to be prepared for baptism. "Faith," says the apostle Paul, "comes by hearing the word of God;" and these converts received the gifts of faith not after much reading, but after most attentive listening to the teachings of Patrick and after witnessing his miracles. Patrick asked Eric why he rose up when all the rest remained seated? and Eric replied, "I know not—I see sparks of fire going up from thy lips to my lips." Then this true apostle of Christ said, "Wilt thou receive the baptism of the Lord which I have with me?" And Eric replied, "I will receive it." Then Patrick led his converts to a well within the enclosure of Tara, opened his book and baptized not only Eric, and Conall, the brother of the king, and the royal poet, and Fiacc, but we are told "many thousand men."

After this Patrick visited the poet, Dubthach, at his home in Leinster. While there he asked Dubthach to find him a person among his converts, of devout life and unblemished morals, whom he could consecrate bishop. Dubthach said he knew such a person, but he had gone on a visit to Connaught. But while they still talked of this matter, Fiacc, his young disciple, entered, and he told Patrick that this was the man of whom he had spoken. But Patrick said: "Perhaps he does not wish to become an ecclesiastic?" The poet, who knew the mind of his disciple, said: "Set about tonsuring me, that Fiacc may see it." Fiacc asked immediately what they were doing, and on being told, exclaimed: "This must not be; for there is not so great a poet in all Erin as Dubthach." "You can take your master's place," said Patrick; and Fiacc answered, with the glow of a true poet in his heart: "Less is my loss to Erin than that of Dubthach." So Patrick tonsured Fiacc, and with the tonsure came the grace of his state. His progress in the learning necessary to fulfill his ministry was such as to be pronounced a miracle, and he was not only Bishop of Leinster, but of the whole province. Patrick gave a reliquary, a crozier and a book-satchel to Bishop Fiacc,

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and left seven companions with him, all of whom became noted in the Irish church. One, Nainnid, was surnamed the pure-handed, and it was this man of singular virtue who administered the holy viaticum to Saint Bridget.

It was Fiacc who wrote the hymn containing the life of Saint Patrick. There is a copy of this hymn in Rome, and it begins thus: "Fiacc of Sletty it was that composed this eulogy of Patrick; the first life of the apostle of Ireland." We may say here, that it is noticeable what favor the bards, or poets, found with Patrick. These bards, whom he found at the courts of all the princes, soon learned to sing the praises of Jesus and of the true God, with a sweetness which, we are told, often won the angels from heaven to listen to them and to join in their praises; and the Harp of Tara became as dear to Christian as it had been to pagan Erin.

From the time of the Easter baptism at Tara, the faith of Christ was established in Ireland; for although there was opposition and contradiction, neither ever ended in blood. Even the best laid plans to murder Patrick and his companions, and thus give them the martyr's crown and palm, failed; so that Ireland was converted, literally, without a martyr. There is no end to the charming stories in the ancient life of Saint Patrick called the *Tripartite*, concerning those who believed and were baptized. But there is one which must not be passed over. One morning, at sunrise, Patrick and his priests went to a fountain; and while they sat around it, probably to recite the Psalms for the day in common, Ethna the Fair, and Feidelm the Ruddy, two daughters of Laighaire Mac Neill, came to the fountain to wash their hands as they were accustomed to do. When they saw Patrick and all his priests and religious sitting at the well in white garments and books in their hands, they imagined they saw phantoms. But soon recovering their courage, they asked: "Whence are you? From the world of spirits? Are you gods?" And Patrick

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answered: "It would be better for you to believe in God than to ask concerning us." Then the elder daughter said: "Who is your God, and in what place is he, in heaven or earth? Is it under the earth, or on the earth, or in seas, or in streams, or on hills, or in valleys? Has he sons and daughters? Has he gold and silver? Is there plenty of every good in his kingdom? Tell us, plainly, how we shall see him and how he is to be loved and how he is to be found? Is he young or old, or is he ever-living? Is he beautiful and have many fostered his son, or is his daughter handsome and dear to men of the world?" Saint Patrick, full of the Holy Spirit, answered: "Our God is the God of all, the God of heaven and earth, the God of the seas and the rivers, the God of the sun and moon and all the other planets, the God of the high hills and the low valleys; God over heaven, in heaven, and under heaven; and he has a mansion, i. e. heaven, and the earth and the sea and all things that are in them. He inspires all things. He enkindles all things. He gives light to the sun and to the moon. He created fountains in the dry land, and placed dry islands in the sea, and stars to minister to the greater lights. He has a Son, co-eternal and co-equal with himself; and the Son is not younger than the Father, nor is the Father older than the Son. And the Holy Ghost breathes in them. And the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are not divided. I desire, moreover, to unite you to the son of the heavenly king, for ye are daughters of an earthly king." And the daughters said, as if with one mouth and one heart: "How shall we believe in this king? Teach us duly, that we may see the Lord face to face. Teach us, and we will do as you say to us." Then Patrick, seeing the innocence of these young princesses, instructed them in the chief doctrines of Christianity, baptized them and put a white veil on their heads, and they desired to see Christ face to face. But Patrick said to them: "You cannot see Christ unless you first taste death and unless ye receive the body of Christ and his blood." Then the

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daughters of Laeghaire, that king who had believed with his mind but not with his heart, who had, indeed, believed against his will, replied: "Give us this communion that we may be able to see this prophesied one." They accepted death as the condition of a sight of this one altogether beautiful; received the Holy Communion and fell asleep in death. Patrick buried them in one grave, and their friends made a great lamentation over them. His old enemies the Druids, were aroused. Two of these, Mael and Caplait, came out openly against Patrick as the cause of the death of the young princesses, for they had "fostered," or as we should say, instructed, these daughters of the king in their religion. But when Caplait openly accused Patrick, this apostolic man preached to him, instructed him, and with such success that Caplait believed and cut off his hair. After this, the other Druid, Mael, came and said to Patrick: "My brother has believed in thee; but it shall not serve nor strengthen him, for I will lead him again to our worship." He said this to Patrick with many insulting gestures; but Patrick preached to Mael, also, and the Druid believed in God and in Patrick. And Patrick shaved his hair also. And so well was all this known that there was a proverb: *Mael is like Caplait.*

Among those who were baptized by Patrick on Easter Wednesday, the 5th of April, 433, were "three brothers, viz., Cathaceus, Cathurus, and Catnean, with Catnea, their sister, who used to milk the deer." And we read, after this, that Patrick gave the veil to Mathona, the sister of that Benen who scattered flowers over the priest of God while resting in his father's house, and who is known to us to-day as Saint Benignus.

In reading the life of Saint Patrick, we see a continued stream of benefits flowing from his hands, for which no other return is sought than what is for the saving of souls. Once, on his travels, he found two brothers fighting for their dead father's estate. Patrick stretched out his arms, and the hands of the brothers

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were fixed to their swords so that they could neither raise them nor lower them. "Sit ye," said Patrick; and we do not hear that he spoke one word of admonition, but that "he blessed them, and made peace between them;" drove from their hearts the demon of strife and put in its place the spirit of brotherly love. Is it strange that they gave part of the land about which they had quarreled to Patrick, that he might build a church and that prayers might be offered there for their father's soul?

The angel, Victor, who had appeared to Saint Patrick while a slave, never deserted him. His life long, Patrick had the society, the advice of this celestial friend. During all his journeyings through Ireland as an apostle, the angel Victor was his companion. It was by the order of Victor, that Patrick went to Rath-Daire, where lived a certain prosperous and venerable person, named Daire. Patrick called upon this rich man, and asked him for land on which to build a church. "What place will please you?" said Daire. "On the great hillock below us," answered Patrick. "Nay," said Daire, "not on the hillock, but in the valley below." So it was in the valley that Patrick founded his church, and there he remained a long time. After a while the rich man; Daire, began to think how lavish he had been to give such a fertile piece of land to Patrick; and as the valley was rich in grass, he sent two of his steeds to feed on Patrick's meadow. But Patrick no sooner saw the horses of Daire feeding on the grass lands given to the Church, than he saw into the soul of Daire; saw that he grudged the rich grass which he had given away; and Patrick's soul was full of displeasure at Daire. But hardly had the strong steeds put their teeth to the sweet grass, than they fell dead on the field! The servant who had brought the horses went back to Daire, told him of Patrick's displeasure, and of the sudden death of the horses. "That Christian," said he, "killed your steeds because they ate the grass on his land." At this Daire broke into a furious passion, and ordered his ser-

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vants to plunder Patrick, and to drive him off from his land. But no sooner was this order given, than a violent colic seized Daire so that he was at the point of death. His wife remembered his order to his servants to rob Patrick, and told him that his death-sickness had come upon him as a punishment; at the same time she sent messengers to Patrick, begging him to send her holy water, or "prayer-water," as it was called, for her husband. Patrick blessed the water, saying: "Only for what the woman has done, there would never be any rising from this sickness for Daire." Then he ordered the messengers to have the water sprinkled over the horses and over Daire. And the dead steeds sprang to their feet and followed their groom, and Daire rose from his bed of sickness. Soon after this, Daire wished to show his gratitude to Patrick, and sent him a brass cauldron as an offering; and when Patrick received it he said: *Deo gratias*, or "Thanks be to God!" When his servants returned, Daire asked what Patrick said to the cauldron; and they said: "*Gratzicum.*" "This is little reward for a right royal offering, like a good cauldron," said Daire; so he ordered his cauldron to be brought back to him. When the servants came to take away his cauldron, Patrick said: *Deo gratias;* and when Daire asked his servants what Patrick said at the loss of his cauldron, they replied: "The same that he said when we took it to him—*Gratzicum.*" "This must be a good word with him," said Daire; "*Gratzicum* when it was given to him, and *Gratzicum* when it was taken from him." But Daire's wife understood that her husband's pride and avarice stood between him and the man of God; and she finally won him to go with her and submit himself to Patrick in all things. This once done, not only was the brass cauldron returned to Patrick, but the hill which he had asked for at first was given to him and a church was founded there. Patrick and his priests and Daire, with the nobles of the country besides, came to the hill to mark out its boundaries and

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to bless and consecrate them. When they were come together, on the very spot where the church was to stand, they found a doe with its fawn, which the people started to kill, but Patrick forbade them, saying: "Henceforth let it take care of itself;" and sent it gently forth from the hill northward.

A certain man named Eochaidh, had a daughter named Cinnu whom he wished to marry to a man of noble family, the grandson of Cairpre Mac Neill. But walking one day, she met Patrick with his companions, and Patrick said to her: "Why do you leave a heavenly power for an earthly one?" and he explained to her the truth of the Church, and the sweetness of a divine union with her heavenly spouse. And she believed and was baptized. But when her father continued to urge her to marry, Cinnu asked Patrick to intercede for her with her father that she might be allowed to espouse herself to a heavenly Bridegroom. Eochaidh finally gave his consent, on condition that he should himself gain heaven without being compelled to be baptized. Patrick made the promise, and Cinnu was allowed to consecrate herself to God. After many years Eochaidh neared the end of his life, but he had done nothing, it would seem, towards securing heaven. When dying, however, he made those around him promise not to bury him until Patrick had come to him. At this time Patrick was in Ulster; but the death of Eochaidh was manifested to him, so that he came to the house of mourning when its master had been dead only twenty-four hours. On entering the house, he sent out the persons who were about the body, and bending his knees to God, shed tears, still praying, and then called in a clear voice: "Rise, O King Eochaidh, in the name of Almighty God;" and immediately at the voice of Patrick he arose, and as soon as he had composed himself he spoke; and the lamentations of his people were turned into joy. But the condition to which he had refused to submit in life and health, he was now most happy to embrace;

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for having been instructed by Patrick he was baptized. Moreover, he described to the people those rewards and punishments which await us after death, in order that they might practice the Christian precepts more readily. Then it was that Patrick offered him a choice, to live fifteen years piously and truthfully as the king of his country, or to go to heaven and to its exceeding great reward.

And the king answered: "Though the sovereignty of the whole world were given to me, and though I might live many years, I would count it all as nothing in comparison with the good shown to me. Hence it is, that I pray more and more that I may be freed from the miseries of the present life and sent to the eternal joys awaiting me." Which Patrick having heard, as well as those around him, he said to Eochaidh, "Go in peace and journey to God." And the king gave God thanks, in the presence of his people, for this permission, and commending his soul to the Lord and to the prayers of Patrick, his spirit departed. Thus it was that God rewarded him, in the end, for the liberty which he gave to his daughter to lead a life in union with her divine spouse.

The labors of Saint Patrick were given to every part of Ireland, and his blessings, bestowed in return for their readiness to listen to his preaching and to practice the faith, have never been withdrawn. In Connaught alone, where he lived seven years, he left fifty churches; "fifty bells and fifty altar chalices and fifty altar cloths in the land of Connaught, each of them in his church. Seven years was he preaching to the men of Connaught, and he left them a blessing and bade them farewell." It was in the same manner and in the same spirit, that he visited every part of the beautiful island to which he was sent by God as a true apostle. While in Leinster, he predicted the birth of Saint Columba or

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Saint Columbkill; for laying his hand on the head of Fergus Mac Neill, he said:

"*A youth shall be born of his tribe,*
Who will be a sage, a prophet, a poet."

But of all the blessings which Patrick pronounced over Ireland, its counties, its hills and valleys, its lakes and streams, none is so noted as that which delivered it from the trail of the serpent. The story of his sending all the snakes, large and small, into the sea, is familiar to every one; and yet every one hears with astonishment, that to this day, a snake, however harmless, is unknown in Ireland.

There is a pretty plant with a triple leaf and a head, or tuft, of white or purple flowers, which grows everywhere. It is seen in America, north, south, east and west. In Rome, one finds it springing up along the winding avenue which leads to the church of Saint Pancratius, and among the small stones of the court of Saint Alexis. More like this Roman three-leaved plant than our own clover, is the delicate one which over-runs Ireland; its leaf so small that we hardly think of it as a sister to our own rank clover. But this little plant, which the Irish call *Shamrock*, is the symbol, of all others, dear to the people of Erin. The Harp of Tara is never complete without the garland of shamrock; and its tiny leaf is enough to beautify any page; to commend any architecture however plain. It nestles among the gorgeous hues of painted windows and is always welcome; and when its triune leaves are set in some chimney, they ensure hospitality. Our saint found this little plant in Ireland, and it was his use of it which has consecrated it as the symbol of Ireland. While disputing with the Druids at Tara, and while they arrogantly challenged him to prove to them that there could be three divine persons in one Godhead, he stooped to the ground, and plucking one of the tiny shamrock leaves at his feet, cried out to them: "You ask how there can be three divine persons in

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one Godhead? Behold these three leaves perfect in one, and question not the omnipotence of the one true God, Creator of all things."

We must not forget the "sweet sounding bell of Saint Patrick," which is still in existence. It was made by one of Patrick's disciples, Macecht, and blessed as it was, seems to have been used by Patrick as blessed bells are still used by pious people, in order to keep off danger, and especially the dangers which come from those spirits of evil who walk the earth seeking who they can draw from the grace of God. At one time Patrick made a retreat of forty days and forty nights. At its close, these spirits of evil intention came around him in the shape of birds, whose blackness hid from him the heavens and the earth. Patrick immediately put himself anew to prayer, recited the psalms of David, then rang his bell, and finally, seeing their persistency, threw it among them in holy anger, so that a piece was broken out. Another time this bell played a fairer part in the story of Patrick. During an interview between the angel Victor and the saint whom he protected so faithfully, Patrick made some very bold requests for the Irish people; so bold that Victor hesitated about their being granted. But when he returned to Patrick, he told him that his prayer had been heard, and commanded him to "ring his sweet sounding bell," and kneel down and bless the people of Erin. It was a little iron bell, and once when he flung it down among some dense bushes, a twig of birch grew through the handle, which was kept with the bell.

But the long life of Saint Patrick, so rich in merits, so wonderful in the course of its providential circumstances, must come to an end. It had been more than a hundred years since the angel Victor had come to him with a special mission from God to preach to the Irish, and now he had come to prepare Patrick for his departure from this world. The aged saint, although no feebleness

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of mind or body seems to have come upon him, was still forewarned in his own mind that his death was at hand; and he therefore prepared to go to Armagh, wishing to die there. But Victor said: "Not at Armagh, but at Saul, shalt thou await the resurrection." But as a consolation for this disappointment, he was told that his influence should be felt in Armagh to future ages, as strongly as if he were there alive himself. After this, the angel told him what orders to give for his funeral; viz., that two young oxen from the herds of Conall should be yoked, and these being left to guide themselves, wherever they stopped should be the place of his burial. Arriving at Saul, death came to Patrick only as a gentle severing of the worn thread of life. He received the last sacraments of the Church which he had served so faithfully, so heroically and so long, from the saintly bishop, Tassach; and then for twelve days all the clergy of Ireland who could be assembled, watched around him with hymns, and psalms and canticles. The voices of the angels blended sweetly with the voices of the cantors, and a light, brighter than that of tapers, illumined the place where he lay in the venerable majesty of more than a hundred years, and in all the beauty of sanctity.

But now came the dispute as to who, in all Ireland, should possess this venerable body? The Hy-Nial claimed it for that Armagh which he loved so well as to wish to die there; while the people of Orion claimed that he should be buried at Down. The prophecy of Victor the angel was now fulfilled. Two young oxen were yoked to a chariot by the clergy, and sent forth without guidance. They rested on the spot where the Cathedral of Down now stands, and here the saint was buried, in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age.

There is a wonderful proof that the Church founded in Ireland by Saint Patrick was one with the Church of Rome, and one with the Church of our own day, in the existence of a missal,

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referred by the best authorities to the founder of the monastery of Lothra, Saint Ruadhan, who died in 584.

The Mass, as given in this missal, begins with the litanies of the saints, with an antiphon which expresses the same sentiments as our *confiteor*. Then the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, with a prayer or collect, and a lesson from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, eleventh chapter, relating to the Holy Eucharist. The gospel is from the sixth chapter of Saint John, and the creed is given. And when we come to the most solemn part of the mass, or canon, we have, not only the very same words of the consecration, but all the prayers which follow it, even to the memento for the dead. The priests of the sixth century in Ireland used the very same prayer which we find to-day in our missals: "Humbly we beseech thee, O Almighty God, command this offering to be carried by the hand of thy holy angel unto thy heavenly altar, in the presence of thy divine Majesty, that all of us who receive, through the participation of this altar, the most holy body and blood of thy Son, may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace, through the same Christ our Lord." In addition to the every-day mass, this missal gives us a *Mass of the Apostles*, a *Mass for Martyrs*, a *Mass for Saints and Virgins*, and a *Mass for the Dead*.

A communion hymn is preserved in an ancient book of Antiphons, beginning with the words,

Sancti, Venite, Christi Corpus,

the very words which Patrick and his dear disciple Sechnall heard the angels singing; so that from the time of Patrick to our own, these blessed words have been sung; and in Erin they were accustomed to sing them when the people received the body of Christ in the Holy Communion. The hymn of Saint Sechnall,

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which he learned from the angels when in company with Saint Patrick, translated, reads thus:

Oh! come, ye holy ones,
Christ's body receive;
Come, drink the Sacred Blood,
For life it will give.
Saved by Christ's Body,
And saved by His Blood,
Refreshed now and strengthened,
Sing praises to God.

He comes, the first, the last,
Himself, the Christ our Lord,
He who shall come to judge us
For every act and word.

The ancient histories tell us of the work done for Ireland by Saint Patrick; the great work done for America and the United States, through Saint Patrick, by the faithful priests and laity of Ireland, is still to be written. But the sweet burden of this debt of gratitude will enter into many a prayer, and many a hymn of praise, and many a deed of charity in honor of Saint Patrick; and in that last day, when not only the evil deeds of men will be manifested to the world and their authors punished, but the good deeds of good men will be seen in all their beauty, measured in all their greatness and only valued for their exceeding worth, then will the fulness of glory come to Patrick. Then will he be crowned before men and angels, not only for his apostleship to Ireland, but for the most remote consequence of that glorious apostleship in the most remote corner of the world; in the most deserted wilderness, on the barest rock and hill-top of the Rocky mountains, as well as among the populous cities which stand in their beauty on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. From city and

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country, town and hamlet, from the miner's cabin and the halls of legislation as well as from parish churches and cathedrals, there will go up to heaven, as long as time endures, a hymn of praise to God for the blessings which have come to us in America, from the apostle of Ireland, and the father of the Irish people.



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SAINT CUTHBERT.

IN that part of England which lies close on the Scottish border and is still called Northumbria, lies the pleasant valley of Lauderdale. This valley, or *dale*, is watered by a river which pours its clear waters into a still larger river, known as the Tweed. On this river stand the beautiful ruins of Melrose Abbey; but ancient as these ruins are, before their fair Gothic arches had been carved from the stone of the mountain quarries, the future saint of Melrose kept his master's sheep among the hills that overlooked the Lauderdale. The parents of this shepherd-lad have left no traces of themselves in the world. They are supposed, however, to have had a good position among those vassals to whom the rich Saxon lords gave the care of their herds and flocks. Like other shepherd-boys, our Cuthbert was accustomed to guard his flocks, by night as by day, in the open air. Like other shepherd-boys, too, he was hardy and active; and we are even told that he excelled all his young companions in the sports of his age.

But this activity and lightness of limb was not all that distinguished him among his fellows. The lessons of his peasant mother, Christian as she was, of his peasant father, who was a Christian also, sunk deep into the heart of the playful little Cuthbert. There must have been a beautiful example, too, before

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his eyes in that cottage among the glens and hills overlooking the Lauderdale, for our Cuthbert was as pious as he was playful.

One night he sat wrapped in his sheep-skin under the open sky, watching the flocks dozing in their pasture. His young eyes, used to fighting off sleep, were fixed steadily on the dark clouds that hid the stars from his sight; for he hoped to see some of his favorite constellations marching out to keep him company. Suddenly, as he looked, these heavy clouds parted; but instead of a constellation, or even one star appearing between them, they seemed to have been separated by a luminous train, like that of a comet. This luminous train became longer and brighter, and then Cuthbert saw, as if they were a part of the train itself, forms of surpassing beauty, each more brilliant than the one which came before it; and not only one, two, or even ten of these floating figures, but a multitude; all of them, too, shining as only the angels of heaven are seen to shine by mortals; and this multitude were all descending towards the earth. But, wonderful to behold! no sooner had one touched the earth than all remounted towards heaven, carrying with them a soul which they had come to bear to its eternal reward.

No sleep came to the eyes of our little shepherd-boy that night. He was not obliged to look for the stars, nor to count his sheep over and over again, to keep awake through that whole night. A supreme happiness lifted his mind, and heart, and all his senses towards God, and towards that heaven from which he had seen the angels descending and then returning with their beautiful prize. He was almost sorry to see the white dawn breaking in the east; and as he turned his steps homeward, he felt as if the night only had been real and that the breaking day was a dream.

That very day a messenger came from the abbey at Melrose to the scattered cottages of the Lauderdale hamlet, saying: "Last night Aiden, the holy man, was called to his rest in God!"

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When Cuthbert heard this, he exclaimed: "Then it was the soul of the holy man Aiden which I saw last night carried to heaven by the angels!"

Now Aiden was the bishop of Lindisfarne, and was the missionary and father of all the country round. Everybody, therefore, was bewailing his death and this loss to all Christian people. But Cuthbert could only remember the glory of his entrance into heaven. "So, it was on the Holy Isle of Lindisfarne," he said to himself, "that the angel alighted last night; and I, a mere shepherd-lad, was privileged to see how God rewards his saints!" From this time there burned in the heart of the shepherd-boy, Cuthbert, a desire to live in such a manner as to die like the holy man Aiden. Day after day and night after night, as he followed his flocks or watched them on the hill-sides and the edges of the glens, his eyes turned where, beyond the glens and across the hills, stood the Benedictine abbey at Melrose. He could not actually see it, but he knew the very tree on the near hills that hid it from his keen sight.

Two, or perhaps three years passed by, and Cuthbert was often called from watching his sheep. He was a good horseman and a good marksman. When the lords of this region went out to defend themselves against their Scotch neighbors, Cuthbert was sure to be chosen from the youth of his hamlet for the fray. He was just fifteen and was on his way from some border victory, when he got permission to return by the way of Melrose. How his heart beat as he rode up to the gate, knocked, and saw it opened by a brother in his dark habit! Shepherd though he was, he had the air of a young knight as he asked the brother: "When can I see the Abbot of Melrose?" "The abbot and prior, with all the brothers, are singing the Vespers," replied the brother, in a low voice; "but wait patiently, and he will see you."

What a change from the noise and excitement of the border

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war! But the heart of Cuthbert sighed for its holy peace. When he saw the abbot, Eata, coming towards him, he dropped on his knees for his blessing. The right hand of the abbot was raised a moment over Cuthbert's bowed head, and then Eata said: "Rise, my son! What has brought you to Melrose, fresh, as I see you are, from the wars?"

"Oh, Father," exclaimed the youth, still on his knees, "will you not receive me among the least of the brothers at Melrose?"

"What! lay aside your arms, give up your good steed, and be a monk?" said the good abbot, laughing.

"Do not doubt me, Father; I can fight my sins as well as I can fight a border foe!"

"I am glad that you understand there is fighting to be done in a monastery," said the abbot. "Meet your spiritual enemies with the same courage and determination to conquer, that you have met your border foe, and you will be even more certain of victory." Then turning to the brother: "Speak to Father Boisil." A moment after the brother returned with Father Boisil, the saintly prior of Melrose. "This is Father Boisil, our Master of Novices," said Abbot Eata to Cuthbert, who knelt for his blessing also. As he raised his eyes, he met the mild look of the holy friar, and from that moment the master and the novice understood each other. Each saw, in the other, one who, like himself, thought only of God and of the shortest way to heaven.

It was under Father Boisil, afterwards a canonized saint, that Cuthbert studied the Holy Scriptures; and with such fervor did he study, with such fervor did he practice what he studied, that Father Boisil used to say to the abbot: "Rightly was he named Cuthbert; for he is, according to the meaning of his name, *illustrious for skill.*" And the abbot, who loved Cuthbert as if he were of his own blood, would answer: "And if we call him

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Guthbertus, we shall still hit the mark; for is he not *worthy* of the service *of God?*"

When Eata was made Abbot of Ripon, he said to Boisil: "You must part with your beloved Cuthbert. It is enough to leave our beautiful Melrose; give me, then, this good youth for my consolation." So our Cuthbert went with Abbot Eata to Ripon, a monastery founded by King Alcfrid in the southwestern part of Northumbria. Here it was his duty to attend to strangers—a post requiring great wisdom and virtue. Saintly, indeed, was the hospitality of our Cuthbert towards his guests at Ripon. There was no one too high in station to be touched by the simplicity of the humble monk, or to venerate him in the midst of his assiduity to please; neither were there any too rude in manners, too uncouth in speech or too lowly in station to be served by Cuthbert, even so far as to washing the feet of the weary and dusty traveler. Often, too, in these wild regions, travelers were overtaken by snows. The zeal of Cuthbert knew no bounds at such times. Every plan was invented to discover these unfortunate ones. When found, he would chafe their stiff limbs with his own hands and hold them in his arms, as if the warmth of his compassionate heart would warm theirs.

Still it was not Ripon which was to claim Cuthbert. When Eata returned to beautiful Melrose, he took Cuthbert with him. Here he was again united to his friend and master, Saint Boisil, but not long; the pestilence which swept over Northumbria, took the holy prior on its way. As Eata and Cuthbert stood by the body of the saint after death, Cuthbert said to Eata: "Twice have I now seen the soul of a saint passing to God!" and then described, for the first time, to Eata, the vision which decided his vocation as a monk. The abbot heard him in tearful silence, for both were too deeply afflicted to speak much; but he said in his heart: "Who, then, so worthy to fill their places?"

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When, therefore, the Chapter was called after the death of Boisil to elect a prior for Melrose, Cuthbert was chosen to fill the place of his friend and master; but no sooner had the responsibilities of his new office been laid on his shoulders, than he, too, sank under the contagion. In an agony of concern for their young prior, the abbot and the whole community besought Heaven for his life. When he was told that they had thus passed the night in prayer for him, he called out, with even an increase of his usual energy: "What am I doing in bed? It cannot be that God will not hear the prayers of such men; bring me quickly my staff and my shoes." He rose immediately, and started on his usual rounds, leaning on his staff.

Now it is that we see Cuthbert returning, with new ardor, to the work in which he was engaged when he left Melrose for Ripon; which was no less than the work of a missionary to all the region around Melrose. Although these good people wished to be Christians, they were still uninstructed; therefore, if any one fell dangerously ill, they resorted to all the old pagan superstitions for him, instead of prayer or medicine. Scattered over the hills, valleys and moorlands of this wild country, there was but one way to reach them; and this was to travel from hamlet to hamlet; often from house to house. The roads could scarcely be called roads, and could be traveled only on horseback or on foot. Although, as we saw at the beginning of his life, Cuthbert was used to the first, he chose the latter; and the people of Northumbria saw the prior of Melrose walking humbly from one village to another, from one cottage to another, to attend the sick, instruct the ignorant and seek out the unrepenting sinner. He would pass weeks and entire months, outside his beloved monastery, instructing the people of these wild mountain regions. No inclemency of the season, no hunger, no thirst, checked the young missionary, who guarded souls as faithfully he had once guarded the lambs of his flock on the cold hill-side. How eagerly

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he was looked for by those good shepherds of Northumbria! How they welcomed him to their humble abodes! How they served up for him the best of the simple fare of cottagers! Above all, how attentively they listened to his instructions; how sincerely they tried to practice them!

But again Cuthbert was called from his beloved Melrose. Eata was made abbot and bishop of Lindisfarne, and he could not go without Cuthbert. Although not yet thirty years old, he was regarded by his superiors as the one best fitted to fulfil the duties of the prior of Lindisfarne. It is, then, at Lindisfarne that we next see our Cuthbert; at Lindisfarne, where the angels descended to claim the soul of the holy man Aiden. It seemed, indeed, as if the remembrance of his vision, when a shepherd-lad on the Lauderdale hills, gave new fervor to his piety; for was it not the sight of the consolation given to Saint Aiden in death, as the reward of his pious life, which had decided his own vocation? And now that he treads the same cloisters, walks on the same beach, hears the roar of the same breakers on the coast, he is inspired to walk more faithfully than ever in the path of prayer which Saint Aiden loved.

Labor of the hands, at Lindisfarne, was followed by the singing of the divine Office. In both, Cuthbert exceeded every one in fervor and punctuality. Sometimes he would chant the Office alone, as he walked round and round the island to keep off sleep. Again he took up the care of souls. Again he sought out the stray lambs and sheep of his fold; and not only did he cure the wounds of sin, but he cured their bodily ailments by the fervor of his prayers.

After twelve years of missionary labor, his soul thirsted for the solitude of the Fathers of the Desert. He asked permission to retire to a small island near Lindisfarne, called *Farne*, inhabited only by the sea-birds of that region. Permission was at length given him. The waves of the North Sea, dashing against the

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rocks which protected his little asylum, helped Cuthbert to chant his canonical hours. The sea-gulls became his friends. From that time the inhabitants of Northumbria have called them "*Saint Cuthbert's Birds*"; believing that their gentle confidence in man was learned from Saint Cuthbert. In the illuminated missals and choir-books of Lindisfarne, "*Saint Cuthbert's Birds*" are found in the initial letters: and their long, graceful necks are seen intertwined among the richly-painted borders. A small shell is thrown in great numbers on the rocks along this coast, and especially on the coast of Farne. The people of Northumbria still call them "*Saint Cuthbert's Beads*," and still describe the saint sitting on the rocks and fashioning these little shells into the strings of beads used even then for counting one's prayers.

But while Cuthbert thus lived apart from his brethren, he would never allow that it was because he was more holy than they. "How perfect," he used to say, "is the life of those good monks who obey their abbot and spend their time in fasting and prayer; how many do I know whose souls are purer, richer in grace than my own! and in the first rank my dear master Boisil, who received me and formed me as a novice at Melrose!"

Neither did Cuthbert deny himself to those who came in their boats to his Island of Farne, for spiritual help or for consolation. Once, too, the monks of Lindisfarne came to keep Christmas with him in his grotto, on the shore of his small island. Cuthbert never allowed his guests to go from him fasting, and they knew not which to admire most—his severity towards himself or his amiability to others. One day, however, Cuthbert saw approaching his island cell a grand barge, instead of the rude boats of the people on the coast and of the monks of Lindisfarne. He began to tremble for the peace of his dear solitude, but immediately lifted his heart to God and was absorbed in prayer until the barge touched his rocky shore; then, true to the virtue of hospitality, he hastened to bid them welcome. What

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was his astonishment, when he saw the King of Northumbria, with his principal lords and nearly the whole community of Lindisfarne, who had accompanied the barge at some little distance! No sooner had Cuthbert come to the shore from his grotto, than the king knelt humbly down for his blessing, with all his followers; then, without rising from his knees, he begged Cuthbert to accept the bishopric which he had been allowed to fill by the Synod while under Bishop Theodore! Cuthbert, who saw an end to the peace of his solitary life, wept on hearing this request. "Cuthbert has never refused labor," urged the king; "why should he refuse this?" "At least," replied Cuthbert, "allow me to spend the winter in my solitude. Then, if it please God, I will, at Easter, try to bear the burden which you have laid upon me."

With the coming of Easter he kept his word; but Cuthbert, even while bishop, was no less a monk and even hermit. Without intermission he ran over his vast diocese, confirming his people, followed by crowds who listened to him with delight and reverence; giving alms, either in food or clothing or the coin of those rude times; healing the sick, and converting the sinful. He made his way to the most distant hamlets and slept under tents. Often he had no other shelter than a hut, made of branches from a neighboring wood; while from this hut would flow the torrent of his eloquence and of his charity. A contagious disease broke out in a portion of his diocese. Cuthbert hastened to the spot. In one of the unhappy villages, having visited all who remained alive, he turned to the priest who was with him, saying: "Is there still any one sick here, that I may bless him before I go?" The priest pointed out to him a poor woman, her face bathed in tears, who had already lost one son by the pestilence, and held the other in her arms while he breathed the last sighs of his agony; the bishop ran towards her, took her young son in his arms, kissed him, then blessed him and returned

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him to his mother with these consoling words: "Woman weep no more; have no fear, no sadness: your son is safe, and no person, after this, will die here of the pestilence."

Two years, only, did Cuthbert labor as bishop. Consumed by his zeal, he felt himself near death. Having celebrated Christmas with his dear monks at Lindisfarne, he determined to resign his mitre and crosier and return to his island cell. Embarking on one of the boats of the monastery, he found himself once more in his grotto; here he lived two months. His sickness was long and painful; but how sweet was the privilege to his monks at Lindisfarne to share this solitude; to sit beside him on his bed of stone; to hear from his venerated lips the words of heavenly wisdom! "Bury me," he said, "where I have fought my little battle for Christ; where, I hope, I have won a crown from my merciful judge." He received all the last sacraments; then raised his eyes and his arms to heaven in a transport of love. At the hour when the monks at Lindisfarne began to sing matins, on the night of the 20th of March, 687, he breathed out his soul joyfully to God.

Immediately, one of those in attendance upon him climbed to the point of the rock where a lighthouse now stands. Waving a lighted torch, he gave the signal agreed upon to the monks of Lindisfarne, which told them that Cuthbert, the pious shepherd-boy, the fervent monk, prior, abbot, bishop, had, like the holy man Aiden, gone to his rest in God. Cuthbert was only fifty years old; and thirty-five of these years had been lived under the habit of a Benedictine.

The eye lingers over the true story of a shepherd-boy of Northumbria, as over some romance; and the Catholic traveler who visits Melrose and Lindisfarne, with their beautiful abbey ruins, is never satisfied, until his feet touch the rocky shore and he stands in the grotto hallowed by the virtues and prayers of Saint Cuthbert, on his Island of Farne.

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SAINT ROBERT.

"THE boy's heart is set upon a monk's habit and cowl," said Theodoric to his wife Ermegarde.

"And very wisely too," replied Ermegarde.

"Yes, yes; there can be no doubt as to the wisdom of his choice," said Theodoric. "There is a little natural pride in my heart which would be gratified by seeing so handsome and spirited a boy as Robert win his spurs as a Christian knight; but if you can give him up, I will never breathe my fond ambition into his ear. Besides, I shall really feel happier when the sacrifice is once made. His prayers will be a grace and a protection to all of us, far exceeding any honor or protection which might come to us from his fame or his arms."

So it was settled, between these noble-born and virtuous parents, that Robert should be gratified in his wish to be a monk. Theodoric was one of the chief nobles in the province of Champagne, France; and Robert was a son to add to the glory of his high lineage. But neither the pleasures of youth, nor the coming honors of manhood, could turn his thoughts from a life consecrated to God under the rule of the monastery. At the age of fifteen—the age at which the shepherd-boy, Cuthbert, had presented himself at the gates of Melrose hundreds of years before—Robert, the young noble of Champagne, was taken by his father to the Benedictine abbey of Montier-la-celle.

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The first look at that open, serious face, so innocent in its beauty, won every heart; and this first impression was confirmed by the conduct of the young novice. Although one of the youngest in the house, he made such advances in perfection as to be chosen prior soon after he had made his vows. In due course of time, but while he was still young to hold this office, he was appointed abbot of Saint Michael *de Tonnerre*.

At Saint Michael's, Robert's trouble began. "Our new abbot expects altogether too much of us," said the monks one to another. "Many of us have lived longer than Father Robert under the cowl, and it is not for such over-zealous youths to stir us from our old ways." What was at first said in a whisper, from one discontented monk to another, soon became the common feeling of the house. They did not contradict the new abbot by word of mouth, but by their behavior. Robert was cut to the heart to see this spirit among his monks, His own life of self-denial and absolute observance of the rules, seemed to irritate them, instead of rousing them to press onward in the way of perfection.

But while his own monks were thus refractory and obstinate, the singular piety and virtue of the abbot of Saint Michael's became known among other monasteries of the order. He was most prized, however, by some anchorets, or hermits, who dwelt in the neighboring desert of Colan. These hermits had no regular superior; and when they heard of the discontent of the monks of Saint Michael with their too pious abbot, they entreated that he might be sent to them. This was finally done, and he was received by these hermits as another Moses, who would lead their souls to the heavenly Canaan. Robert found the monks in a very unhealthy place. Without any delay he removed them into the forest of Molesme. Among the ancient trees of this forest, it was easy to build little cells with the branches, and the forest sheltered them from the winds of winter. A small oratory,

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built also of boughs, was dedicated to the honor of the Holy Trinity. This was in the year 1075, when Robert was fifty-seven years of age.

The poverty of these good religious, and their life of hardship, at length became known. Several noble families, stirred up by the bishop of Troyes, vied with each other in sending them what are called *the necessaries of life.* At first this kindness was pleasing to Robert, because it showed the good will of Christians towards one another. But very soon he became alarmed. This unusual plenty was against the rule of poor hermits. They had not left the world in order to draw towards them the luxuries of the world, nor even to enjoy what worldlings call *necessaries.* "But one thing is necessary to a good hermit," Robert used to say, "and this is the loving favor of God."

But although Robert warned his monks and set them an example of holy poverty, they resisted his wise advice exactly like the monks of Saint Michael's. The truth is, the love of ease and luxury if once indulged, even in things which seem innocent, gives one a disgust for obedience as well as for things simple and plain. Finding that his reproofs did no good, our Robert left the new monastery at Molesme, and went by himself to a desert place called Hauz. Here he found a few hermits living in the simplicity and fervor which alone suited the ideas of the noble-born Robert. Like them, he worked for his coarse food and poor clothing, and gave all the time at his disposal to prayer and meditation. This was a heaven on earth to Robert; and the hermits, seeing in him a pattern of all virtue, chose him, by their silent votes and without any talk among themselves, for their abbot.

In the midst of this holy peace, a messenger came from Molesme to Hauz. "We have prospered in nothing since you left us," said the messenger; "the whole community, as one man, desires your return; and that you may feel no scruple about

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leaving your new charge, we have taken pains to procure an order from the pope himself, and also from the bishop. Every one of the community promises, through me, perfect obedience for the future, if you will overlook past faults and help them, by your example, to live strictly by their rule."

Robert was only too glad to hear of their good resolutions. The hermits in their cells at Hauz heard with grief of this recall of their new abbot; for Robert would not resist such an appeal. During one year the monks of Molesme kept their promise of obedience; but the second year many seemed weary of well-doing, although some held fast to their resolution. Every day the rule of Saint Benedict was read before the whole community, and every day these faithful observers of it longed to fulfill it more perfectly still. After a time, six of the most faithful waited on the abbot and besought his permission to go into some solitary place, where they could live according to the rule of Saint Benedict. "Not only do I give you my permission and my blessing," answered Robert, "but I will accompany you myself." Overjoyed by this answer, they were ready to go with Robert without delay. No sooner, however, was this known, than fifteen others declared their resolution to go with them, in order to lead lives worthy of the spiritual sons of Saint Benedict.

With this little community of twenty-one ardent disciples, Robert set forth, the second time, from his home at Molesme. Many who had not the courage to follow him, looked after him with sad hearts, and even with tears. They remembered the weary years of his former absence, when the favor of Heaven seemed to be taken from them. Our travelers, on the contrary, went forward with light hearts, until they came to an uninhabited forest covered with woods and brambles, and watered by a little river that wandered among these waste places. Here they paused. They were only five leagues from the city of Dijon, but they seemed hundreds of miles from it. With the joy which

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such men know in labor, they began to grub up the shrubs and roots. From the trees around them they built their cells, as in the early, fervent days at Molesme. They settled here on the 21st of March, or Saint Benedict's Day, in the year 1098, when Robert was eighty years old. Age never cooled the ardor of his holy soul, and the young who followed him were never light-footed enough to outstrip his untiring practice of virtue. This new home in the wilderness was called Citeaux; and its name is famous in the annals of Christendom. The rule of the abbot allowed the monks four hours every night for sleep; four hours for singing the divine praises in the choir; on working days, four hours of labor with hands; and after this the monks read until the hour for singing Nones. Their food was of roots and herbs.

One year from the time Robert set forth from Molesme with his ardent disciples, a deputation set forth from Molesme for Rome. Again the monks asked from the pope the return of the aged abbot; again, too, they promised to conform themselves to the holy rule of Saint Benedict, under his guidance and example. The pope, Urban II., wrote forthwith to the archbishop of Lyons to urge the return of Robert to Molesme; and again the aged man trusted to his repentant children. He was received by them with every demonstration of love, and their promises, this time, were kept. When Robert again left them, at the age of ninety-two, it was in obedience to the call of God himself. He died among his own children, to secure whose salvation he had so faithfully labored.

But our monks of Citeaux, what of them? Faithful to the rule of Saint Benedict, they began to send forth swarms of devoted monks to other wildernesses in England and Germany, as well as in France. The beautiful abbeys of Furness, Fountains, Kirkstall, Bolton, Tintern, beautiful still in their ruins, were founded by the monks of Citeaux, who learned to walk in the way of perfection and holy poverty under Robert of Molesme.

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While Bernard lived for God and became a glorious saint, at at Clairveux, which had been settled by the *Cistercians*, as the monks of Citeaux were called.

And all these marvels of sanctity in life, of beauty in architecture, of learning in schools, flowed from the persevering holiness of one man; and especially from his perseverance in one virtue, —*the love of poverty*. Now-a-days, people think themselves very good indeed and worthy of a special reward from Heaven, if they bear poverty patiently, when they cannot help it. But Saint Robert of Molesme and all the fervent souls who followed directly in his footsteps, as well as all the saints of God, in whatever age or country, preferred poverty to riches; that is, they took pleasure in living without luxuries, and in dividing with others whatever riches they possessed, just as worldly people take pleasure in making money, and in adding to their wealth. Saint Robert of Molesme, and all the saints, studied to find out the best way to fix their whole minds and hearts upon God, as the source of all good and of all happiness. They found the best way to do this, was to disentangle themselves from worldly cares, especially from the cares that come from the pursuit and even the possession of riches. Once knowing this, so far from desiring riches, they fled from them. There could be no covetousness among such men. There could be no dishonesty, no envy at another's prosperity. The cause of nearly all the growing vices of our own time, as well as theirs, is the love of luxury and the desire for money in order to obtain it. All these vices are cut off, at one blow, by the lovers of holy poverty, The most wonderful fact in this matter of holy poverty is, that persons born to wealth and honors are often the very ones to despise both. They learn, by experience, that wealth and nobility have nothing to do with happiness; but above all, they learn early the danger of riches and high position; and thus the lovers of holy poverty often come from the ranks of the rich. "*The hastening to be*

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rich" builds luxurious homes; often more luxurious than honesty would allow. The love of holy poverty builds cathedrals, seminaries of learning, hospitals for the sick-poor and asylums for orphans. The love of luxury and the desire for riches has filled a great many prisons. The love of holy poverty has filled, and continues to fill, a great many convents and monasteries, where holy men and women follow the example of Saint Robert of Molesme.

It will give some idea of the veneration in which Saint Robert is held, to remember that an altar has been dedicated to him, as Robert of Citeaux, in the ancient basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem at Rome. This church was built by Constantine, at the request of his mother, Saint Helen, in order to deposit there the relics of the Passion found by her in Palestine, and she even caused several loads of earth to be brought from Mount Calvary.

The life of Saint Robert was written by his immediate successor, Guy, Abbot of Molesme. His feast is kept on the 29th of April.



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SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA.

ONE of the first blooms of April, in our northern clime, is the slender anemone, or *wind-flower* as it is often called; because, frail and slight as it seems to be, there is a brave hardiness about it which allows it to meet the rough breezes of early spring, bending under the gusts of wind and of rain but never breaking. Sometimes the small, starry flowers are as white as snow-flakes, and sometimes they have a soft flush on their petals or a streak of rose pink. These brave little wind-flowers always step forth to welcome the feast of Saint Catherine of Siena; and at the same time, groups of gay children will be seen, searching among the dry weeds which cover the ground on the edge of pine clearings, or among the tufts of evergreens and grey moss-cups edged with scarlet, on the warm, sandy plains, for the fragrant arbutus. These early spring blooms, might well be named as the emblems of a saint whose virtues have all the heroic delicacy of the wind-flower, while no perfume from beds of pink arbutus could draw us to its hiding place with more delight, than the sanctity of "Catherine, virgin flower of Siena." In a sort of valley among the streets near the great monastery of Saint Dominic in Siena, lived a virtuous artisan, named James Benincasa, and his wife Lapa. This Benincasa was descended from the noble family of Benincasa; but while he bore the name, he had inherited none of its riches and supported his family by his labors

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as a dyer of fine wools. Not far from his house was a fountain, called Fonte Branda, where he washed and rinsed his cloth and yarns, and hung them up to dry in the sunshine. From this he was called the Dyer of Fonte Branda. His cheerful, handsome wife, Lapa, was the mother of his twenty-five children, and one of the youngest was our Catherine, born in 1347. There could have been very little time to pet or spoil any of these children by indulgence. But James Benincasa was not poor, and his home was a beautiful and a happy one for himself, his wife, and his children. The little Catherine, as she took her place among all her brothers and sisters, won the hearts of everyone by her freshness, sprightliness, and amiability; so that she was fondly called Euphrosyne, which means, *joy of the heart.*

But if there was no time to pet and spoil these twenty-five children in one house, time was found to teach them their prayers. When only five years old, little Catherine could say the Hail Mary as well as any of her brothers or sisters. Nor was she contented to say it only at the times when she was told to say it; but had a way of reciting it as she ran lightly around the house or to the church; dropping, every now and then, on her childish knees, as she imagined the angel to have done, when he said: *Hail, Mary, full of grace.* Her little heart, at times, seemed too large for her body; she felt as if it would leap out of her throat, so glad and so joyous was she; and very often as she turned, after saying her prayers, from the grand old church of San Domenico towards her father's house, her feet did not seem to touch the earth, but to skim along, like a swallow, just above it. There was a wonderful happiness in the heart and in the life of this little girl; as there was a wonderful light in her eyes and a wonderful sweetness in the smile on her lips; a happiness which seemed higher than that of the children around her; more like the happiness of the angels; such as the people of those days saw everywhere in pictures.

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One day, when she was six years old, her mother, Lapa, told Catherine that she could go with her brother Stephen, who was the next older than herself, to see their married sister, Bonaventura. The church of San Domenico, or of Saint Dominic, stood between the house of their father and the house of their sister. As they were going down a steep street, the little Catherine saw suddenly, in the air, on the very highest point of the church of Saint Dominic, a resplendent throne, on which sat our Lord Jesus Christ, vested like a pope and around him stood Saint Peter, Saint Paul and Saint John the evangelist. This Savior, whom she had loved so devotedly as long as she could remember, fixed upon her a look full of majesty mingled with ineffable tenderness. Then he blessed her and smiled. This sight threw the little Catherine into such an ecstacy that she forgot her brother's presence; forgot, too, that he was walking away from her. The little Stephen stopped before he had gone far, not seeing Catherine; then ran back for her, and taking her hand, said: "What are you doing here? Why do you not come?" But Catherine does not hear him, does not see him, and continues to smile looking up at the beautiful vision before her eyes. At last, as if she had wakened from a long sleep, she lowered her eyes and said to her brother: "If you saw the beautiful things which I see, you would not disturb me thus." When she had said this, she raised her eyes again in order to gaze upon the celestial vision but it had disappeared! The little girl was inconsolable. She wept and reproached herself for having ever turned away her eyes from the face of her Lord.

From this time, Catherine had nothing of childhood about her but its innocence; her whole mind was set upon the perfect love of God, and upon the way to do his will. She devoted herself to prayer and to praise; and as if her own prayers and praises were not enough, she urged her little companions to unite with her in these pious exercises, and also in her mortifications; for

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the little Catherine already understood how to deny herself. In those days of devotion and of self-denial, even young children in a family like that of James Benincasa, heard all about the lives of the saints; of saints who found their ways into wildernesses and deep solitudes in order to serve God more perfectly. These wonders were all familiar to the little Catherine, and one day it came into her head to live in this way herself. She would go on foot, without even her dear brother Stephen, to some of those grottoes and caves which she had seen around Siena. As she walked on, she found a grotto not far from the roadside and to her childish eyes it looked like a cave in the desert. The loneliness, the deep shadows, the hush of the noises of the city, made it a charmed spot to this little chosen one of God. She set herself to prayer without delay, and as if God would respond to her ardent desire to be united to him, she was raised from the ground in an ecstacy of adoration. But while thus in the presence of God, he made known to her that she was too young, too feeble, to practice such a life. The Holy Ghost condescended to instruct the innocent child, telling her to return to her parents. She was ready to obey. But when she came out of the grotto which had such a charm for her when she entered, she was struck with terror at the solitude around her. Then she remembered the lonely ways by which she had come to the grotto, by which she must return in order to go to the city, and her young heart sank within her. It was so far to her father's house and would not her mother reprove her for her long absence? The more she thought of all these things the more she was distressed; and then she did what she was in the habit of doing when she was distressed or perplexed; she prayed. No sooner was her heart lifted to God, than she felt herself carried by some supernatural power to the gate of the city. Then she hastened home, to find she had been missed only so far as to have her mother suppose she had gone to see her sister Lysa, another married sister.

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But besides the love of prayer and of solitude which had sprung up in her heart, an idea took possession of her mind which was a direct gift of the Holy Ghost. In this family of twenty-five children, where the good mother, Lapa, was intent upon marrying off all her daughters, Catherine, instead of thinking of her own wedding day and of the festivities that would celebrate it, had resolved to have no spouse but her divine Lord. She remembered, with a sort of ecstatic satisfaction, what our Lord said about "the children of the resurrection, who neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels." It was all very well for her sister Bonaventura and her sister Lysa to marry. They had had the blessing of the Church on their wedding day, as well as the blessing of their good parents. But because marriage was good, it was no sign that there was not a state better, more pleasing to God, in which she could sanctify her soul and prepare herself for more ineffable delights in heaven. With this idea came another; she would sometime be a sister in one of the many convents in Siena. Instead of a white lace veil with orange flowers, like that her sisters had worn when brides, she would put on a black veil and be espoused to her crucified Lord like the Dominican Sisters. In a transport of self-renunciation, this child of seven years threw herself on her knees, promising to shut out all mortal love from her heart and to keep it as a garden enclosed, where Jesus only could walk. But who could help her to keep this promise, so well as Mary, the queen of virgins, who had been conceived without sin, and who would plead the cause of this little girl with her divine son? Therefore, turning her thoughts immediately to this queen of angels as well as of virgins, she said: "O most happy virgin, your divine son alone do I wish for a spouse; and I here promise, both him and you, to keep myself innocent for the love of him, so long as I live."

After this promise, so solemnly made, the little Catherine

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seemed to fly along the path of perfection, trodden so painfully and slowly by others. She gave up her own will in everything. Never had such obedience been seen among all the other twenty-four children of Lapa. Instead of asking for the choicest fruit on the plate, or the nicest patties or cakes, she would give her own share to her brother Stephen; while, side by side with this self-denial, grew stronger and stronger in her young heart the love of God's glory and a love for the souls of sinners. Then, too, she longed to be a little novice among the "Mantelettes," as the Dominican Sisters were called. But this was to be won by many sacrifices and after severe contradictions.

The Benincasa family did not incline to vocations for a religious life. The fashion with them, was, to marry. "Our Catherine," said Lapa to her husband, "will soon be of an age to marry. She is prettier than any of her sisters, and a great favorite. We must find a husband for her who is of a good family and rich; which we shall never do unless she goes among our friends and joins in our pleasures, instead of staying in church. Then, too, she must dress as becomes her age." James Benincasa was accustomed to give his wife her way in all these matters. She knew when money was to be saved and when spent, and he had no fear that she would run up longer bills than he could pay. She was a prudent woman and understood marrying off her children, as well as the keeping of her house. Therefore, it was settled that Catherine was to be nicely dressed and was to go out with her older brothers and sisters. But Lapa was not more interested in this plan to marry off Catherine, who was then in her teens, than her oldest sister, Bonaventura. This sister was like her mother and believed in enjoying the world innocently. It was Bonaventura, who was ready to lend all her own trinkets and jewelry to adorn Catherine, and she grudged none of the time spent in arranging her beautiful hair. As to Catherine, although she never gave up her wish to become a nun, although she never

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forgot her promise to keep her heart for Jesus Christ alone, yet she shrank from vexing or displeasing her mother and sister. "After all," she said, "they will know soon enough; until then, they can be in peace." It ended by not only pleasing her mother and Bonaventura, by allowing them to dress her in the most becoming ways, but by being pleased herself. She was willing to have them praise her slender waist, her fresh complexion and youthful beauty. But precisely at this time she was made to realize that she was leaving the ways of recollection and prayer, of self-denial and mortification, which she had loved as a child. Suddenly, in the midst of her most beautiful years, her sister Bonaventura was called out of this world. It was like a thunderclap from a clear sky. This family of twenty-five children had grown up around their parents in such health, that death seemed to have no designs upon them. To Catherine, it came like a voice of terrible warning, and with tears and prayers and fasts, she sought to win indulgencies for this beloved sister, who had been so devoted to the things of this world. But although Lapa wept for the untimely death of her eldest daughter, she did not forget what she considered her duty to Catherine, nor did she change her plans in the least. She could not help seeing, that her daughter's mind was set upon a state of life quite different from the one she had chosen for her. Seeing, also, how Catherine's wish turned towards the Dominicans, she determined to gain their influence for the furtherance of her own plans, by asking one of the good fathers to try to persuade Catherine to yield to her wishes. But no sooner did he speak to her upon the subject than Catherine opened to him her whole heart. She told him of the promise, the solemn promise, which she had made to her divine Lord and his blessed mother, when only seven years of age; and that her desire still remained the same.

"But, my child," said the wise priest, "if you really and sincerely wish to devote yourself to God and to leave the world,

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you must give some sign of this, which cannot be misunderstood by your family. For instance, cut your hair. In this way alone can you prove yourself to be in earnest."

What love, what care, what a tender pride in their beauty, had not Lapa and Bonaventura, to say nothing of her other sisters, lavished upon these abundant tresses of dark, glossy hair! How many a flower, or jeweled pin, or silver arrow had they placed among its rich braids with pretty gestures of admiration! All these were remembered by Catherine, however, only to convince her that the good Dominican's advice was very wise. Without a moment's hesitation, she put the shears to these long tresses and they fell. She then threw over her head a veil, to supply the loss of her hair. But Lapa's quick eye perceived it. "What have you done, my daughter? Made yourself a laughing-stock even to your own family! But do not think to thwart me in this way. Your hair will grow again; and meanwhile, you can serve in the kitchen, since you dislike society. By the time you are again presentable, you may not object to a good husband."

Lapa was as good as her word. Instead of spending time or money or taste in adorning Catherine, she set her to work with the cook, and even imposed upon her the meanest work in the house; nor did she allow her time for her usual prayers. But instead of sinking under this trial, or becoming sad, a wonderful joy took possession of Catherine's heart. Instead of a solitude in some far away desert, she had found a solitude in her own father's house. No longer expected to see visitors, not even expected to join in the recreations of the family, her meditations on the perfections of God, on the beauty of his law, on the delight of his service were unbroken from hour to hour. In the midst of servants and the busy scenes of the family kitchen, she made a cell in her own heart, and to this cell came angels and the Lord of angels, saints and the Lord of saints, and Mary their queen. With a delicate ingenuity which no one could have fore-

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seen, she changed all this servile work and drudgery into a most honorable and enviable service. When attending her father like one of the hired members of his household, she said to herself: "In thus serving my father, I serve our Lord Jesus Christ, as Martha served him in the house at Bethany." When called to attend upon her mother like any hired maid, she said: "I serve Mary, the queen of angels and of saints." And when expected to serve her own brothers and sisters, instead of resenting the humiliation, she obeyed their call as if they were the apostles themselves, or those holy women who are the objects of such veneration.

But while Lapa believed her plan to be succeeding, James Benincasa's eyes were opened to see his daughter's conduct in its true light. There was no mistaking a vocation which could make such a position in her own father's house tolerable, to a delicate, sensitive girl like Catherine, even for one hour. When he had yielded to this grace, God vouchsafed to send him another. One day he found Catherine in a most retired spot of the house, prostrate on the floor, absorbed in prayer; while a dove, white as the driven snow, hovered above her head, with its wings scarcely moving. Transported with awe and admiration, James Benincasa stood silent before his own child; then moved noiselessly from the spot. But he left Catherine only to look for his wife. "My good Lapa, what God claims for himself we must resign. He has claimed our Catherine, and has given us such signs of her vocation that we must be both hard and blind of heart, not to understand them." He then went on to tell Lapa of the dove, whiter than snow, which he had seen hovering over Catherine's head as she prayed; reminding her of the patience and humility, quite beyond nature, with which Catherine had served in her father's kitchen and among his servants, for months. Lapa was too good a wife not to listen to her husband; and she was too good a Christian, knew her religion too well, was really too pious

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with all her worldliness, to presume to deny to God whatever he manifestly claimed. The whole question of Catherine's vocation was settled. By her father's authority, she was not only to be restored to her place in the household as a child, but she was to be allowed to practice all her devotions without gainsay or interruption. Nor was this all. From the moment James Benincasa saw the white dove hovering softly over the head of his daughter, a profound veneration for her took possession of his soul. Of all his twenty-five children, Catherine had been his joy and pride from her infancy. He had never thwarted Lapa in the management of her children, and did not in Catherine's case; but it had been a grievous trial to him to see her thus humbled. Now he looked upon her as a fountain of sanctification to himself and to his household. Nothing could be more tender than the respect he paid to her pious wishes, and his expressed command as well as his example, won for Catherine the most perfect liberty in her father's house. The small room she selected was in truth a cell, in which she practiced the austerities and mortifications by which the saints, of all ages, have acquired such command over themselves and their immoderate inclinations. She prayed until far into the night, then slept on a plank instead of on the little bed which her mother had put into her room. Instead of soft clothing, she wore next her skin, at night, a hair shirt, while her food was so scanty and so poor, that Lapa's heart was broken with anxiety. This good mother, so intent upon the comfort of her household, could not understand Catherine's mortifications; and in spite of her husband's command to leave Catherine to herself and to her director, Lapa would hide the hair shirt, carry off the hard plank and try all the little arts suggested by affection, to wean her daughter from her life of penance. But the inspirations of the crucified spouse were stronger than the ingenuity of maternal tenderness, and at the age of twenty, Catherine lived only

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on bread, water and a few bitter herbs. At this time she received the habit of the Third Order of Saint Dominic.

What a day was this, when Catherine, walking beside her mother, took her way from her father's house and ascended one of those steep streets which belong to Siena, to the church of Saint Dominic; the *San Domenico* above which she had seen her first vision! Here she received the white tunic, symbolizing innocence, and the black veil, symbolizing penance, of her dear, and long-envied friends, the *Mantelettes*. Lapa was mortified to have Catherine join this order, in which, hitherto, were to be found only widows and married women, who lived in their own homes; Catherine being the first unmarried member of the order. She returned to her cell in her father's house supremely happy; while the good Lapa lived long enough to know, that her house had been honored when Catherine joined the Third Order of Saint Dominic.

From this moment, Catherine seemed to fly on the road of sanctification. For three years she guarded such a rigorous silence that she spoke only to her confessor. But her body, grown thin with fasts and vigils, no longer stood between her soul and God. It was like a transparent veil, through which she saw God and his angels and saints and Mary, the queen of angels and of saints. With them she seemed to hold uninterrupted conversations; and there is nothing in human friendship and affection so consoling as this intimacy with heaven. One day our Lord said to her: "My child, think only of me and I will think always of thee." With our Lord and his Blessed Mother, came to her cell Saint Dominic and that great disciple of Saint Dominic, Saint Thomas of Aquin. With such saints for her teachers in holy devotion, and with Saint Mary Magdalen as her teacher in piety, she could not fail to become learned in the things of God. But such treasures were purchased with great pain. The more she aspired to keep her heart and all her senses for God alone, the

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more she was pursued by temptations. They followed her in prayer, to the very altar; and she heard a voice always at her ear saying: "Foolish one! who would be more holy than all the good women living in the world. In the end you will be the worst of all." But while she tried, in vain, every thing which those who were wise in the religious life could recommend to drive away these temptations, Catherine never allowed herself to be discouraged, declaring that she "trusted not in herself but in God." All at once the temptations ceased. In place of these dark images, appeared to her our Lord, resplendent in glory. "Ah, my Lord," said Catherine, "where were you when my mind and heart were tormented with such terrible temptations?" "I was in thy heart," he replied, "and was filled with joy to see thy fidelity to me in the midst of such conflicts." Delivered from these torments, she gave herself up to learn lessons in divine things from her two great teachers, Saint Dominic and Saint Thomas of Aquin. From them she learned the excellence of humility, and how pride is the father of lies. From them she learned the sweetness of the Divine Providence, so that she could afterwards say to those around her: "Why are you troubled? Leave every thing to Providence. In the midst of the greatest dangers his eyes are ever upon you to deliver you." Nor was she contented to listen to these instructions herself. With unwearied care she noted down the teaching of her celestial instructors; and thus it came to pass, that this unlearned woman, whose whole life had been given to prayer, became, in the end, the teacher of great scholars; communicating to them the wisdom she had received. Nor was this a matter of memory, a repetition of the words of her instructors. Their doctrine and words gained a new sweetness coming from the mouth of Catherine, and her pen was not merely that of "a scribe writing swiftly"; it was that of one of God's inspired servants. But Catherine was to bear still more open testimony to the wonders of God's dealing with

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simple and devoted souls; only waiting until she had been fortified with a crowning grace.

On the eve of Ash Wednesday, when the world outside seemed given up to revelry, Catherine, alone in her cell, adoring God in utter forgetfulness of the noisy mirth around her, exclaimed: "My Lord, make me strong, in order that nothing may be able to separate me from thee!" And a voice, whose sweetness penetrated her very soul as no music could ever do, answered: "Be in peace; I will espouse thee in the faith."* At this moment our Lord became visible to her, and with him, in the midst of the dazzling glory of his presence, herself more radiant than the sun, Mary, ever virgin, the patroness and queen of virgins, at her side Saint John, apostle and evangelist, also a virgin, with the eye of an eagle and the innocence of a dove; Saint Paul the apostle and doctor of the Gentiles, and worthy to stand beside Saint Peter; Saint Dominic, her gracious father in religion, whose rule of life she had made her own; and finally, David, the royal psalmist, who had been called from following the sheep to be the anointed king of Israel, whose harp had given a voice to all devout souls and penitent souls and adoring souls, from his own time to Catherine's. These made up the choice company of witnesses, when the Immaculate virgin, the "mother of fair love, and of holy hope," took the hand of Catherine into her own hand, and laid it in that of her divine son; a hand pierced for the love of us; and asked for Catherine the ring of the heavenly spouse. Then this gracious son of Mary put the ring on the finger of Catherine, saying: "I, thy Creator, with my celestial Father, I, thy Redeemer, espouse thee now in the faith, and do thou preserve it unsullied until the day when we shall celebrate eternal nuptials in heaven." Then the vision disappeared, leaving a ring on the hand of Catherine, visible only to herself.

As if this heavenly contract was to be a pledge of extraordi-

*This seems to have been the form of betrothal then in use.

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nary protection under extraordinary dangers, this recluse who had not left her cell for three years, was suddenly inspired to go forth on the most heroic missions of charity. Alms-giving was her recreation; and the love of God, which had consumed in her heart all love for herself, seemed to break forth into the most ardent flames of love for her neighbor. The goods of her father were put at her disposal; for James Benincasa knew that his daughter was guided in all things by the spirit of holy wisdom. With an unwearied compassion and feet that never seemed to tire, she sought out those virtuous poor of the city of Siena, who could not bear the shame of exposing their necessities. Many of these were aged people who had known better days, and who silently wrapped their old, thin garments around them, ate the stale crust or would even go without the crust, rather than make known their wants, commending themselves only to God. To such, Catherine flew rather than walked. She had a way of distinguishing such ones at first sight, of finding out their ill-lighted, ill-furnished homes on some winding street into which the sunshine never came. Once found, her loving hand found a way to relieve their distress, to provide a comfortable bed in place of a miserable pallet on the clay floor; to put new bread into the tray, empty or strown with hard, mouldy crusts. This done, she would bring them the pure wine of the country, flour, oil; every necessary of life; while the tear of sympathy, the look of tender and respectful compassion on her face, allowed them to accept with pleasure from her what would have been a mortification from another. Her visits to the poor were often paid in the morning, before the earliest hour for rising and by stealth. At such times, the carefully bolted and barred doors of an Italian town often opened to her miraculously, and when she had left her charitable offering within, closed as usual.

One day when a painful illness kept Catherine in her bed, she remembered that a certain poor widow in her neighborhood had

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no bread for her little children. Her heart bled at the thought, and she finally prayed to our Lord to give her the strength necessary to relieve this distress. The next morning she rose before light, gleaned whatever she could find in the family store-rooms, of bread, wine, oil, and eatables of all sorts, which finally amounted to enough to load a mule. But how was she to carry all this? With a ready wit, which charity inspired, she tied one bundle around her waist, laid another on her shoulders, took a third in both hands, and invoking the aid of Almighty God in behalf of her poor ones, raised her burden. She was not deceived in her confidence. Lightly, as if treading on air without the weight of a feather, she ran to the widow's door. But there her strength suddenly failed; her burden bowed her to the threshold. Praying again, her strength returned. The door of the house was not locked. She opened it and laid down her provisions within. But they were so heavy that the noise of laying them down roused the poor widow. Alarmed at the thought of being discovered, Catherine ran with all speed from the house, but not before the widow had recognized her habit.

Another day, while Catherine was in the church of San Domenico, a poor man asked her for an alms. She had nothing to give him; but so great was her distress, that looking over her person to find something of value, she remembered the small silver cross on one of those cords knotted in a way to serve the same purpose as our prayer beads. She took it from the cord and gave it to the beggar, who was exceedingly grateful. That very night our Lord appeared to her in her sleep, holding in his hand the little cross, no longer plain, but covered with precious stones. "Do you know this cross, my daughter?" he said to her. "I know it," she replied; "but it was not so beautiful when it was mine." "Yesterday," said our Lord, "you gave it to me, plain as it was, out of love. At the day of judgment it shall be returned to you as it is now, to be a glory and an honor."

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The incurable sufferings of her fellow-mortals touched Catherine's tender heart most deeply; above all those of the lepers who were shunned on account of the contagious character of their disease.

One of these unfortunate lepers, named Tecca, filled Catherine's soul with compassion. The poor creature's body was covered with leprous ulcers, and spread such an infection around her that every one fled from her. Seeing her in this sad straight, Catherine adopted her as her own; surrounded her with comforts, and not only nursed her, but embraced and kissed her as if she were a dear friend; for, were not all those who suffered, her friends? This unfortunate woman, however, seeing Catherine's devotion to her, was not willing that she should leave her even to go to mass on Sunday; and when she did go, cursed her benefactress, and even tried to injure her character with all who came near her. Catherine's mother, the affectionate Lapa, tried to persuade Catherine to leave this wicked woman to herself. But Catherine would not relax her charitable attendance, and finally took the leprosy from her patient. But he who can smite with leprosy or heal it, did not forget his well-beloved spouse. Tecca died in sentiments of contrition, blessing the friend she had so often cursed; and—wonderful to the eyes of men—the leprosy disappeared from the hands of Catherine as soon as Tecca's breath left her body!

But there is a leprosy of the soul more dreadful than any which can afflict or disfigure the body. There was a member of the same order as that to which Catherine belonged, named Palmerina. Some wound which had come to her pride, some envy of the honor paid to superior virtue, excited in her heart the most envenomed hatred of Catherine, so that she did not hesitate to do every thing in her power to convince people that Catherine, so far from being a saint, as every one believed, was a sinner and a hypocrite. Meanwhile, Catherine, accusing

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herself as the cause of this great sin on the part of Palmerina, did not cease to pray for her, and especially when Palmerina fell ill of a mortal disease; imploring God to bring her to a proper sense of her wrong-doing. This prayer of charity was answered like so many others she had put up in the spirit of faith; Palmerina not only repented in her heart of the wrong she had done to Catherine, but she acknowledged it openly and asked her forgiveness; and in the chapel of San Domenico in Siena, where Catherine received so many graces, there is an altar-piece, representing Palmerina kissing the hand of our saint.

Peace and joy followed everywhere on the steps of Catherine. Now the honor of some noble house was preserved, now the most violent political enemies were reconciled. At length, in 1368, a terrible revolution breaking out in Siena, the nobles and citizens were armed against each other. Then it was that Catherine, a child of the people, rose superior to all the passions which agitated her countrymen, whether noble or plebeian. In the silence of her cell she heard the terrible outcries of the populace against their noble victims, and hastened to rescue them or to move others to do so. But perhaps the most wonderful of these heroic acts was that in behalf of the young lord of Perouse, accused by the popular tyrant, Nicolas Rulda, of plotting against the government and therefore sentenced to death. Innocent of the charge, he was too proud to plead his innocence, and declared himself ready to die for his country. But this young man, whose honor and courage even his enemies admired, had led a life of dissipation and immorality. Catherine saw his danger. He must not die a death honorable in the sight of men, only to fail at the last judgment. Without regard to the popular hatred, she visited the young noble in his prison; she exhorted him to make himself as innocent towards God as he was towards his country. That voice, through which the Holy Ghost spoke to him, opened all the hidden springs of faith, hope, and charity in his soul, and

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contrition took the place of his self-extenuation; true courage that of self-confidence, and he prepared himself to die the death of the just. One thing he demanded of Catherine, that she should stand beside him on the scaffold; and the recluse, who had lived for three years in her cell without ever mingling with her companions or family, now mounted the scaffold, in the sight of all the people of Siena, in order to encourage a soul to meet God; not as a culprit but as a martyr. The blood of one of the noblest youths of Italy, spurted upon the mantle of Catherine, daughter of James Benincasa, the dyer of the Fonte Branda.

But these heroic acts seemed only to prepare the way for still more extraordinary labors. What saints, like Saint Theresa, Saint Bridget of Sweden, Saint Hildegarde, have been inspired to write, this Catherine of Siena was to speak with the tongue and communicate through the voice. From the time her voice was heard in Siena, the whole people flocked to hear her; men, women; and not only from the city itself, but from the mountains and the country around this Siena, perched on its rocky height. Even monks came from their cloisters to hear the words of heavenly wisdom from her tongue; priests, soldiers, parents and children, the learned and the ignorant, to listen to a young woman, a little over twenty years of age, who had never studied books, and whose motto was, "to love is to know." She loved God, therefore she knew God and could interpret his counsels. We can no more explain such inspired eloquence, than we can explain the inspiration of an Isaiah or of a David. It belongs to God, and is bestowed by him for his own eternal purposes; not to distinguish one weak mortal above another, nor even as an example for others to follow of their own will and for their own ends. Catherine spoke for God publicly because it was his will that she should do so; just as she had remained in her cell for three years without speaking even to her own family, because this was the will of God in her regard.

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Among those who listened to Catherine whenever he had an opportunity, was an artist named Vanni. Every look on that thin face, lighted up as it was by an inspiration from heaven, every lineament, was impressed upon his memory. One day, he was in the church of San Domenico and saw Catherine in an ecstasy of devotion, so that she was raised from the ground as she knelt, and remained so. From this moment, all other recollections of her seemed obliterated from his mind; and he painted her from memory, just as he saw her in her ecstasy. This precious portrait of Catherine has served all other artists as a model, and has brought to its painter a glory he would never have attained otherwise. He is still remembered and noticed in works upon art, as *Andrea Vanni, who painted the portrait of Saint Catherine of Siena.*

Our saint had many friends among the nuns of her native city. Notwithstanding the docility with which she had obeyed the call to a life as much more public than that of other women as her former life had been more secluded, she still sighed for the peace of the cloister, and often remained, for days, among these dear friends in their various convents. The one which she specially loved, was the Dominican convent of Monte Pulciano. At this convent were two nieces of Catherine's, daughters of her sister Lysa. But its chief attraction to Catherine was, that here had lived and died, in the odor of a sanctity well nigh angelic, a Saint Agnes, who was distinguished from all others of the name by taking that of her convent. The body of this Saint Agnes of Monte Pulciano, still remained beautiful and entire. Although it was fifty-two years after her death that she was visited by our Catherine, no sooner did she approach this "humble flower of the Apennines," as Saint Agnes has been called, than the dead saint raised her foot gently, as if making haste to greet the living saint, who had come to venerate her in her tomb.* A portion

*Among the pictures which cover the walls of the principal room, now a chapel, of the house of James Benincasa, this scene is beautifully represented.

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of the relics of Saint Agnes of Monte Pulciano, are honored in the church of Saint Agnes of Rome outside the walls; and on her feast, the 20th of April, bands of pious people and students from all the Roman Colleges, may be seen hastening along the Nomentan Way, to give her their homage.

On a return from one of her pious pilgrimages to those dear convents in 1374, Catherine found her native city a victim to civil war and pestilence. Under such circumstances, Catherine's charity was equaled only by her prayers. And these prayers might be called unceasing, when she found her countrymen, in city after city, withdrawing their allegiance from Pope Gregory XI. Here was a danger to souls, which exceeded any which could come to the body; and which spread, like a contagious disease, from one city to another. At last she was inspired to go to Avignon, where the pope then lived in exile. Gregory did not refuse to see her as if she were a meddlesome woman; but he received her and listened to her, as to one inspired by the Holy Ghost. Catherine's desire was to see the pope again in Rome, in the very chair of Saint Peter. She believed this return to be necessary, in order to inspire confidence in his authority among so many fickle spirits, influenced by circumstances and appearances. To accomplish this return, she went from Avignon to Florence, which might be called the centre of this opposition to the temporal power of the pope, and where there was a bitterness of ill-will towards him which only the spirit of evil could have inspired. So bitter, indeed, was this, that when Catherine reached Florence, and her errand was known, she found herself in the midst of an infuriated mob, resolved to destroy any one who proposed peace with the sovereign pontiff. But this holy soul was not intimidated. Instead of hiding herself from the mob, or flying from Florence, she presented herself before them, and kneeling on the ground before the leader of this mob, she said calmly: "You seek Catherine. She is here. Do to me

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whatever God permits you to do; but hurt none of those who are with me or have given me hospitality." This leader, who, we must believe, was not a bad man, but only zealous in a wrong cause, was confounded by such courage in a woman; and filled, suddenly, with veneration for a being thus indifferent to life, called out: "Fly! fly!" as if he feared that some wanton hand might inflict injury upon her, and thus bring down the curse of God upon their cause. But Catherine would not rise. "No," she replied, "I shall not fly. It is my one wish to give my blood to that God whose vicar you have outraged by your disobedience." At these words, a hush fell upon the vast crowd. One by one it dispersed, hardly knowing why, and tumults had ceased in Florence. After a few days, councils were held among the nobles and also among the citizens; and it was before Catherine they laid all their propositions. With unwearied zeal she traveled between Florence and Avignon on her errand of peace; as the Florentines said: "A dove with the olive branch in her beak." The negotiations closed, to the honor of Florence as well as to that of the pope. Florence blessed this humble daughter of James Benincasa; and when she returned to Siena, in 1378, it was to be met by its citizens and conducted to her house in triumph.

This same year Gregory XI., died, and was succeeded by Urban VI. While this pope was only an archbishop, he had seen Catherine at Avignon; he thus knew her virtue and believed that her wisdom was that which God gives to his saints. Without delay, therefore, he sent a formal order to Catherine to come to Rome. This letter found her worn in body, weak in health; and as she believed that the end of her life was near, longing for solitude. But she did not hesitate. The pope received her with great kindness. There were refractory wills to be won to a hearty allegiance to the sovereign pontiff, even among the princes of the Church; and there were kings and reigning dukes who refused to be guided by him as the chief among the princes of

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Christendom. Urban VI., knew that only a saint could win these rebellious spirits, and with a wisdom which might be called truly celestial, he commanded her to speak to all the cardinals of his court, as they were assembled in council. This address, dwelling as it did upon the wonderful providences shown by God to the sovereign pontiffs, as an evidence of the honor due to them by men, proved to be the very means ordained by God to bring peace into the pontifical household and union among the cardinals themselves.

From the cardinals, Catherine turned towards the sovereigns of Europe. She addressed letters to them; and besought them with such tenderness, with an authority so persuasive, that almost every sovereign in Europe yielded to the inspirations of grace. In this work she was assisted by another saint, also named Catherine; the daughter of Saint Bridget of Sweden; to whom Pope Urban said: "My daughter, I see you have been nourished by your mother's milk." This Catherine, the daughter of a princess, was in sweet friendship with Catherine, daughter of the dyer of the Fonte Branda, and was sought out humbly by her each day in a house on the Viminal hill, where she had a home with the Poor Clares. No honors, no privileges, could ever change Catherine of Siena's opinion of herself; for to herself she was only the daughter of James and of Lapa Benincasa, a mere mouthpiece for the word of God.

That end of life which she had believed so near at hand when called to Rome, had now come. But her own approaching death was no occasion for sorrow. It was the vision, granted to her on her death-bed, of the sorrows lying in wait for future pontiffs, the scandals and sins of Christendom, which made the anguish of her sickness, while fever was wasting her body. When she fell into her agony, however, a new trial awaited her. The prince of darkness, who had tried so hard to overcome the confidence in God and the distrust of herself, which characterized

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this soul, now made one more attempt upon her faith and her humility. So terrible was this last assault, that the religious who attended upon her, trembled at the sight of her sufferings. It was as if they saw the desolation of our Lord himself, when he cried out: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!" But at last, peace came to soul and body. A smile spread over the wasted face, and with hymns of devout gratitude she breathed forth her soul to God on the 29th of April, 1380.

The body of Saint Catherine, clad in the habit of a Dominican, with a black veil and a white mantle, was carried to the Dominican church of *Santa Maria sopra Minerva*, and laid in the chapel of Saint Dominic. She remained there three days, during which time many miracles proved how dear she was to her divine spouse. The walls of the cell in which she died, on the street named for Saint Clare, were moved to the church of the Minerva, leaving the floor, however, for the consolation of the nuns with whom she lived, and were there converted into a chapel. These walls, which had borne silent witnesses to her communion with God and the glorified inhabitants of heaven, were adorned by Perugino with paintings, which draw to this room the admiring attention even of those who care nothing for Saint Catherine herself. Once a year, on the eve and the day of her feast, this chapel is open to ladies, who are allowed to pass through the vast sacristy of the church and enter the room by a narrow entry, on the walls of which are charming little pictures, representing the traditions of the great Dominican saints. But the honor paid to Saint Catherine in the church of the Minerva, does not stop here. On entering this noble Gothic church, designed by Dominican architects, where the angelic Dominican painter, Fra Angelico of Fiesole, was buried; where, too, lie the relics of the great Dominican doctor, poet and saint, Thomas of Aquin, in his own chapel; and where Saint Dominic himself is venerated, surrounded by the saints of his order, the eye falls, first of all,

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upon the spot where the body of Saint Catherine of Siena is honored by Rome and by the world. For under the principal altar of the church, raised, as it is, by several steps from the pavement of the church, we see, within the broad plate glass which serves as an ante-pendium to the altar, five lamps, which burn day and night around the body of Catherine of Siena. Nor is this distinguished honor a mere fancy, a mere caprice, on the part of the Dominicans. The sovereign pontiffs who have succeeded Urban VI., have not forgotten her inspired words and deeds in behalf of the church and of the vicars of Christ; and Pope Pius IX., of holy memory, named Catherine, in the midst of his own sorrows and perplexities, one of the special patrons of Rome and of the Holy See. It is in this capacity, that the body of Saint Catherine lies where the eyes of the whole world seem to fall upon her, in order to bear witness to the honor paid her by the Church of Christ.*

But Siena was jealous of Rome; jealous of this entire possession of the relics of one of whom she was so justly proud. This feeling on the part of Siena was respected at Rome, and the head of the saint, in which had dwelt such noble thoughts of God and for her fellow men, was given to Siena. When this relic of the daughter of the dyer of the Fonte Branda entered the city of Siena, it was carried through the streets in solemn procession to the church of San Domenico, so associated with Catherine, her trials and her consolations. Among the crowds on the streets who thus welcomed her precious relics, might have been seen a woman, bent with years; trembling, yet not so much with age, as with emotions which made the tears stream down her withered cheeks,

From this church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva (or Saint Mary above the Minerva), Cardinal McCloskey, the first American Cardinal, takes his title, so that the interests of the people of America must be remembered there and cared for. Therefore, we may look upon Saint Catherine of Siena, as the patroness, not only of Rome, but of the United States.

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while she leaned heavily on the arm of one dressed in the habit of the Third Order of Saint Dominic. This aged woman was Lapa, the mother of Catherine; and she leaned on the arm of Catherine's dear friend, Alessa. This mother, so affectionately opposed to her daughter's austerities and self-denials, had been allowed to live long enough to see the heavenly wisdom of the choice made by this daughter; and she bent her own head, as this precious head was borne past her, with a love which was more than the love of a mother for her child; for it was mingled with the veneration due to a saint.

The relic was deposited in a shrine of marble and silver of exquisite workmanship, on one of the side altars of San Domenico; and around it, to this day, flock the people of Siena in their joy and their sorrow. The little chapel in which the altar stands, was adorned, about one hundred and fifty years after the death of Catherine, by a Sienese artist known as Sodoma, with frescoes which would give him immortal fame had he painted no others, They represent the ecstacies of Saint Catherine, with a beauty which must have been inspired by devotion. The house of James Benincasa, in which he had lived with his good wife Lapa and their twenty-five children, and among them this same Catherine, was taken possession of by the city of Siena, and, at the public expense, converted into a series of chapels, giving the story of her life in the pictures on the walls. Here are to be seen the articles used by her in life, and especially the small lantern which she carried when visiting the sick and poor at night. To one of these rooms the Sienese bring the pretty little banners of the parishes that win in the public games, presenting them to Saint Catherine as their dear patroness.

The pilgrim to these shrines is careful to secure some medal of Saint Catherine and to lay it on the spots, forever dear, on which she was especially favored by God, and where he permitted the sanctity of this humble child of Siena to be made known to

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the world. Her feast is kept on the 30th of April, when the slender anemones, or wind-flowers, are putting forth their frail blossoms with so much courage; like nothing in the world so much, you will say with me, as this Saint Catherine, virgin flower of Siena.



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SAINT MONICA.

NOT another swallow of water, my darlings, until dinner is served; so do not tease and fret over it. You are not sick, and we must keep to our rule."

"Indeed, nurse, you are too hard upon those children. They are children still; but one would think from your strictness with them, that they were capable of self-control. That little Monica really must be thirsty before the dinner comes on."

"A little thirsty, no doubt; but you will find Monica, small as she is, quite capable of self-control. She will be as happy as a bird all the morning, and not a whimper will come from her lips."

"Ah, well, nurse, since our mistress leaves her own children to your care, and is easy about them, why should I fret over them?"

"It is thus, good Marthusa," said nurse Hecla: "our little Monica, to be sure, asks only for water now; but when she is mistress of the cellar, you will see how water will be despised while the habit of drinking will stick by her. If she learns to deny herself in the drinking of water, it will not be so hard, when she is old enough, not to taste wine."

The little Monica grew up in great beauty and sweetness with her strict nurse, and when the time came for her to sit with the guests around the family board, what a happy pride did the good father take in the manners of his daughter. Sprightly and glad to oblige, it was a pleasure to ask her to run on an errand. Ac-

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cording to the simple customs of the time, the father did not hesitate to call upon his daughter to draw the wine for his guests. There were servants enough, but the graceful alacrity of the daughter had a charm for him; and the wine always seemed fresher and more sparkling when drawn by her hand. At such times, too, Monica would raise the cup to her lips when it was full; not so much for the pleasant taste of the wine, as from vivacity of disposition; and this done, would skip with it to her father's side. By degrees, however, the mere sip of wine in the cool cellar before she ran up the stairs, came to be what would fill a cup at the table. Nothing to speak of as to quantity, but there was a certain relish for the wine itself, more than at first. Our good nurse Hecla had other duties on her hands when the children were grown. Her careful eye, therefore, could no longer follow Monica as before. But Marthusa, a merry handmaiden in all parts of the house, was often in the halls, on the stairway, or in the cellar itself, when Monica was sent for the wine. One day, Marthusa, who was naturally careless, was reproved by Monica somewhat sharply. The girl turned upon her young mistress, saying angrily: "And what is this fault, that you should notice it, since you do not hesitate to sip freely of the wine from your father's cup? If you call me thriftless, I may call you a wine-bibber." At first Monica's temples flushed with temper; a moment after the flush deepened, for it was one of shame. "Marthusa is right," she said in her heart: "I reproved her for a less fault than I commit, every day, myself. Ah! what would nurse Hecla say, if she saw me partaking so freely of the wine, when she accustomed me to deny myself water!" A little while after this saw Monica presented for baptism; and with her Christian father and mother, and with Hecla's example as well as precepts before her eyes, our young Monica was like a rose of sanctity and edification in her father's house.

Close upon this followed the usual event of a girl's life, whether

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at Tagaste in Africa, Rome in Europe, city or village in Asia or America. Patricius was a man of wealth and position. A pagan, indeed, but this was not uncommon; and Monica took her place in her husband's house as thousands had done before her, as tens of thousands have done after her. Patricius was cheerful and very affectionate; but with this vivacity, which made life attractive, he was hasty, even to violence, in his temper. The storms came over his brow like thunder tempests over a summer sky; and such tempests as many a woman has quailed before. There was something awful in them to Monica; but the tripping, light-hearted Christian maiden in her father's house, had become a calm, self-possessed woman in her husband's. There was, no doubt, a heavy pain at the heart; perhaps a weary closing of the eyes, just for a moment; but the wise silence, the mild answer, the candid explanation, when the suitable time came, of things misunderstood, prevented all dissensions. She remembered, too, that Patricius, though noble by nature, was not a Christian; and this gave a tenderness to her patience which took all the sting from his reproaches. Perhaps the burden seemed a little heavier, when she saw the qualities of the father descending to her own sons. There was the same native generosity, but the eyes gave the same flash under excitement. Especially was this true of Augustine; and with the pain of it came also the same charm which Patricius had in her eyes. There was no quiet happiness with either; but with both there lay some power which drew her heart like a loadstone. Amid all these cares, her pious exercises never intermitted. They had become a necessity; not only for her own peace, but for the peace of her family. Every day she assisted at the holy oblation of the altar; twice a day she was present at the public prayer; and eternity was always in the thoughts, always in the mind of this woman, treading, like thousands around her, in the routine of domestic life. There were other thorns, too, pricking at her heart, besides the hasty temper

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of her husband; harder to bear, more humiliating; striking, as the world would say, at the very root of conjugal love. But Monica lived above the ordinary level of womankind, and her steps had found this high level, almost unconsciously, while pursuing so perseveringly the routine of a religious life as uniform as her domestic one; all of which was crowned by the conversion of Patricius, his baptism, edifying virtues and happy death.

Just at this point, when the romance of a woman's life is thought to be at an end, the life of Monica assumes a supernatural grandeur. Augustine was seventeen years of age when Patricius died, and was distinguishing himself in the schools of Carthage. How carefully Monica had watched his fiery spirit! But at one point she had left her own heart unguarded. There was a brilliancy about this boy which dazzled even his Christian mother's eyes. Her son would be a great scholar, she saw plainly. Patricius gloried in this, and Monica was not behind her husband in veneration for learning. What a cruel check was put upon all this sweet, motherly pride, when Augustine declared himself a Manichean! In his youth he had been on the list of catechumens; once too, during a severe illness, all things had been prepared for his baptism; but now, where was the hope or the joy of the mother's heart in her son? His very presence was a torture, and she tried to put him from her sight as one false to all holy things. The tears shed by other mothers over the dead bodies of their youthful sons, were shed, by Monica, over the soul of Augustine, dead in sins and in unbelief. One night she waked from a dream, in which she had seen herself standing on a rule of wood, in deep sorrow, when a young man, all in shining white, asked her: "Why are you thus sorrowful? Dry your tears; your son is with you." Whereupon, casting her eyes where the shining finger of her consoler pointed, she saw Augustine standing on the rule of wood with her. She told this dream to her son.

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"Yes, mother, your dream was a good one, for you will come over to me," said Augustine, smiling.

"No, my son," answered Monica, very quickly; "it was not told me that I was with you, but that you were with me." Augustine said no more, but this swift arrow from the quiver of his mother lodged deep in his heart.

From this time, one thought consumes the life of Monica, the Christian mother. She no longer holds her son from her, for she believes with her whole soul that God has given him to her; but given to her only as pearls are given to the persevering diver. At one time we see her wearying the charitable patience of a Christian bishop who had been once a Manichean like her Augustine: "The heart of the youth is still too indocile," he said, thinking to free himself from her importunity; "but God's time will come." Yet this does not satisfy the cravings of her undaunted aspirations for a dear son. He is a bishop, but Monica will not be shaken off. At last, touched by this perseverance, he exclaims: "Go; continue to do as you do; it is impossible that the child of such tears should perish;" and these words are to her as an oracle from heaven. Now we see her on the shore of Carthage, wringing her hands as she watches the ship that bears him from her; not with her blessing or permission, but by stealth, and with a lie on his lips. She knows herself deserted by this son. She knows that he is weary of her presence, of her tears, of her very prayers in his behalf. Still she follows him; follows him to Rome; follows him to Milan, and to the feet of Saint Ambrose. The honey of the bees that settled upon this saint as he lay in his cradle, has never left his lips; and the words of Saint Ambrose from the pulpit of his cathedral, not only soothe the deep wounds in the heart of Monica, but attract Augustine—hold him with a gracious power which he does not understand. Little by little his heart opens under these repeated exhortations; softens under graces won by his mother's prayers. Now comes

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the breaking of that dawn of faith which makes Augustine a Christian. How steadily does the sun of justice rise over that great heart, that giant brain! How the clouds of error are transformed by those powerful beams, until they become trophies of victory, and as radiant as the clouds of the orient in the first rays of the sun! When did so noble a penitent ever seek the waters of baptism as that Augustine, who now chants with Saint Ambrose the *Te Deum*, on this Holy Saturday of 387, as they walk, side by side, from the font to the sanctuary!

But his mother is dying of happiness. "Son," she says to Augustine, a few days after this, "there is nothing now in this life that affords me delight. What have I to do here any longer, or why I am here, I know not; all my hopes in this world being now at an end. The only thing for which I desired to live, was, that I might see you a Catholic and a child of heaven. God has done much more, in that I see you now despising all earthly felicity, and entirely devoted to his service. What further business have I here?" At this time they are at Ostia, on their way from Milan to Carthage, but it is not with anticipations of returning to her native country that the heart of Monica is filled. She dwells so constantly in her conversation on the happiness of heaven, that some one asks her if she would not feel sorry to be laid in a place so far from her own country? To which she replies: "Nothing is far off from God." Five days after comes the last illness; but while the fever presses sorely upon her, she says to her two sons, Augustine and Navigius: "Lay this body anywhere; be not concerned about it. The only thing I ask of you both is, that you make remembrance of me at the altar of the Lord wheresoever you are." When the ninth day of her illness, the 4th of May, has come, her soul is loosed from its body, which had been its holy companion for fifty-six years. Augustine, who is now thirty-three years old, closes her eyes. Her sanctified body is carried to the church, where the sacrifice of our ran-

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som is offered for her. And now, alone, Augustine, calling to mind all her holy conversation before God, all her care and affection for her children, gives free vent to the tears which he has held back until now; and writes: "If any one think it a sin in me thus to weep for my mother some small part of an hour; for my mother, so lately dead to my eyes, and who for so many years had wept for me, that I might live to thy eyes, O Lord, let him not deride me for it; but rather, if his charity be great, let him weep also for my sins before thee." Years afterwards, the burning heart of Augustine writes again in his Confessions: "I pray for the sins of my mother; hear me by the remedy of our wounds, who hung upon the cross, and sitting on the right hand intercedes for us. I know she showed mercy, and forgave from her heart all debtors; forgive her also her debts."

And thus it was that another saint went before God; not, indeed, from the ranks of virgins or of martyrs, but taking with her the full, ripe sheaves of a wifehood and motherhood wholly consecrated to God. It was no compromise with the world nor its ties; but a holocaust of body, of mind, of heart and of soul, upon the one altar of the cross; the altar of God in Christ Jesus. This was the way in which saints went from the world, straight to God, during the years of that age called three hundred; in the same way, and in no other, do saints go from the world to God in this century, called the nineteenth of our Christian era.



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SAINT BERNARDINE.

IF you ever visit Italy, and I hope you will, my advice to you is, while on your way from Rome to Florence, minding nothing about guide-books or the tourists you may see hurrying on to Florence, strike off from the beaten track and refresh your mind and heart and imagination and your piety too, by a visit to Siena. Everything there will be new to you. There is no collection of photographs which will at all prepare your mind for the treasures you will find at Siena. The tides of the sight-seeing world do not set towards that eagle's nest, on the very summit of one of the rocky heights of Southern Tuscany, and as you come nearer and nearer and see at last the outline of the beautiful dome, and the rocks blossoming out into graceful edifices, you will feel certain, that what has been so neglected by the world of travelers, must have some special charms in reserve for those who have the courage to cross her dreary environs. No sooner will you have stepped within her ancient walls, than you will realize what this charm is; for everywhere you will see proofs that she is, what she claims to be, the City of the Virgin! Worthily to picture forth the graces and the glories of this Virgin, was the delight of the pious artists of Siena; and never were the brave citizens of this republic so happy, as when they saw completed, in all its freshness of coloring, and its heav-

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enly grandeur of conception, the "Coronation" of this beloved patroness, painted in fresco over the Roman gate of the city of Siena, under which her citizens passed, as under an arch of triumph. As if this devotion to the Virgin Mother had sent forth lovely blossoms directly from its root, we find this month of May—the month of fresh pasture lands and green meadows, of buds and blossoms; of singing birds and the perfumes of birch twigs and shy lilies of the valley, and the month consecrated to the special honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary—the one chosen to sing the praises of the two saints of Siena, Saint Catherine and Saint Bernardine.* The first has already found a place in these pages; and now having paid our pilgrim's visit to the house of the humble daughter of the dyer of the Fonte Branda, we will follow, as near as we can, in the still fresh foot-prints of the young saint of the noble house of Albizeschi; while to Siena, and to Siena alone, we must look for those pictures which most worthily and enthusiastically, commemorate their virtues and their sanctity. And when you go to Siena, and the gate of Saint Ansano catches your eye, remember that to Ansano of Siena, that "famous painter who lived wholly in God," you owe the noblest pictures of the Blessed Virgin of which Siena can boast, as well as of her two faithful children—Catherine and Bernardine.

Our Bernardine was born in the year 1380, at Massa, near the city and within the republic of Siena. He lost his mother when only three years old; and his father, who was the chief magistrate of Massa, before he was seven years old. But this, doubtless, was in some degree made good to him by the tender cares and the pious watchfulness of his aunt, Diana of Albizeschi, who infused into his young soul, the most ardent sentiments of piety towards God and that special devotion of a Sienese child, an affectionate devotion to our Blessed Mother.

*The feast of Saint Catherine, in the English missal is set down for the 5th of May.

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With these pious affections came their natural fruit—a love for the poor. One day a beggar came to the door of the noble lady, who was richer in virtue than in worldly treasures; at least for that day. "Alas!" said the gentle-hearted Diana, "alas, my poor friend, I have no food, even, to give you; for my family dinner, this day, I have but one loaf of bread."

The beggar was turning away, when the little Bernardine whispered to his aunt: "For the love of God, dear aunt, let us give something to this poor man; for, how can I eat of the loaf of bread myself, knowing that he has gone away hungry?" The lady Diana, who did not mind the privation for herself and was only fearful of the privation for others, was charmed by this sweet disposition in her nephew; and the beggar left them consoled and his hunger appeased. By degrees, she accustomed Bernardine to practice fasting according to his strength; and all his life long he fasted on Saturday, in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

At eleven years of age, his uncle took him to the city of Siena to educate him; and obedience was found united to the love of study and great quickness in learning. But the crown of this Sienese boy, as noble in mind and heart as he was noble by birth, was his most tender and exquisite modesty. What we read concerning Saint Aloysius, more than a hundred years after, was true in as marked a degree of Saint Bernardine. Saint Aloysius lived only to the age of twenty-three years and three months. Saint Bernardine lived to the age of sixty-three years and eight months; but his singular delicacy of mind and conscience always remained with him; showing, that modesty is not a virtue which blooms in youth and dies with it; but that it is an attribute of the soul, outliving even the blush of youthful modesty. It was with this tender blush, showing how deeply his heart was pained by indelicate words or jests, too common in schools and in crowded streets, that the holy and gentle boy rebuked

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those who used them, whether old or young. Once, when this offence was given by a gentleman of quality, the boy, at all other times so mild, so silent, so careful to respect age and position, gave a rebuke which the nobleman never forgot. The boldest and the most impudent youths stood in awe of this sincere lover of holy purity, this lily of the schools; and, if speaking in a way to wound him, they would check each other if they saw him, saying: "Hush, here comes Bernardine!" and this charm was united to exceeding beauty of person and gracefulness of manners.

Bernardine was only seventeen years old, when he joined a confraternity of Our Lady, for taking care of the sick and the poor in the hospital of Scala; where are still to be seen, pictures, commemorating his devotion to the suffering. Soon after this a terrible pestilence broke out in Siena, so that many persons died, every day, even in this hospital. Bernardine, seeing not only his patients, but the physicians and attendant priests dying around him, persuaded twelve young men to join him in serving the hospital; expecting a speedy reward in an early death, amid such pious labors. For four months they stood in the very jaws of the devouring pestilence, night and day, attending the patients with the most unwearied devotion, and procuring for them everything necessary for their complete recovery; and, strange to say, the twelve young men were preserved from the awful contagion. When it ceased, Bernardine, however, sank for a time under the effects of these labors; but his patience in his own sickness was as heroic as his charity to others.

Scarcely had he recovered from these months of illness, when, with the tenderest patience, he attended for fourteen months an aunt who was blind and bed-ridden. This was not his aunt Diana, for whom he must have had a peculiar affection, but another aunt, named Bartholomaza, a lady of great piety. When God called this gentle sufferer to himself, Bernardine retired to a house at some distance from the city, making the walls of his garden the bound-

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ary of his walks. Here, in solitude, fasting and prayer, he endeavored to learn the will of God for his future life. After some time he took the habit of the order of the Seraph of Assisi, among the fathers of the Strict Observance, at Columbiere, a solitary convent a few miles from Siena; and, after the year of novitiate, on the 8th of September made his profession. Having been born on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, out of love to her, he chose this day for all the great actions of his life. On it he took the habit of a son of Saint Francis; made his vows to a life of obedience, chastity and poverty; said his first mass and preached his first sermon. In this solitary Convent of the Dove as its name implies—the Dove of the Holy Spirit—every faculty of his mind, and of his heart, expanded under the ardors of a piety truly seraphic. He became a missionary preacher, and went through all the cities of Italy in his coarse garb of a Franciscan friar, with the cord of chastity, which he loved so much knotted close around him; sometimes pelted by rude boys, as they saw the emaciated stranger on the highways, but always carrying with him the heart of the crowds who flocked to hear him.

"Why," asked some person, of an eminent preacher of the same order of Saint Francis, "why do not your sermons, really so great, bear fruit like those of Bernardine?" "Because," replied the eminent preacher, who must have been eminent for humility as well as for learning and eloquence, "because Brother Bernardine is a fiery burning coal. What is only warm does not kindle a fire in others like the fiery coal which you have only to breathe upon to fan into a blaze." It was by words bursting forth like flames from his ardent soul, consumed with the love of God, that he converted the multitudes who listened to him. They were charmed, first by his voice, and then pierced through and through with contrition; not a momentary contrition, but an abiding sorrow, leading those who had defrauded to make restitu-

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tion; those who owed money to pay their just debts. Enemies hastened to be reconciled; gamblers flung away their cards; women cut off their hair, of which they were so proud, and laid their jewels at his feet.

We are told that Saint Bernardine used to hold in his hand, while preaching, a tablet, on which was carved, within a circle of golden rays, the holy name of Jesus. A certain man, who had earned his living by making cards and dice, went to the saint, and told him how, in consequence of his preaching, gambling had so gone out of fashion that he was reduced to beggary. Bernardine heard the poor man's story; heard it patiently and sweetly; and when he had opened his whole heart, told him to use his ingenuity in carving tablets like the one he held in his hand, and to sell them to the people. Every one who had sat under the spell of that gentle countenance, of that voice, so powerful in its sweetness, no sooner saw a copy of this tablet, associated with all the sanctity of his presence, than they were eager to have one; and the man, who, by the manufacture of gaming cards could scarcely keep himself above want, by carving these tablets, whose only ornament was the name of Jesus, soon made a fortune. In most of the devotional pictures or statues of Saint Bernardine, he is seen holding one of these tablets, the I. H. S. encircled with rays, in his hand.

It was this story of a noble youth, devoting himself, first to the bodily and then to the spiritual sufferings and sicknesses of his fellow-men, which inspired not only Ansano of Siena, but many other artists of that pious city, to express their delight at his canonization by the pope, Nicholas V., in the year 1450, in pictures which were likenesses of the saint, and are yet wonders of artistic beauty and majesty. The saint was never tired of impressing upon his countrymen the littleness of this world compared with the next; and his favorite maxim was: "Mind the things that are above, not the

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things that are upon the earth." Noble words which Saint Paul the apostle wrote to his friends at Colosse, to encourage them on their way to heaven. It was in memory of this, that Ansano, who had seen the saint, and had heard him pronounce these sublime words, painted a banner for the Observants after the canonization of Saint Bernardine, representing the saint between two angels of a celestial beauty, looking towards heaven and seeming to spring towards it through the ardor of his desires, while the world was under his feet; in his hand, a book, in which was his favorite maxim. The canonization by Pope Nicholas, was only a confirmation of the honors rendered to him by his grateful countrymen and fellow-citizens. Perhaps no one felt the justice of this canonization more than the haughty duke of Milan, Philip Visconti. When Bernardine preached first at Milan, he said some things which the duke might very properly take to himself. A proud tyrant, who had been accustomed to make every one fear him, he would not be rebuked by a poor friar. Sending for Bernardine, he told him, plainly, that "he would find a way to silence him forever, if he presumed to speak again in this manner."

The saint, nothing daunted, replied: "What greater happiness could you promise me, than to die for the truth!"

Seeing that threats were of no avail, and hoping that Bernardine might be greedy for his convent if not for himself, he sent him a hundred ducats in a golden bowl. Bernardine would not look at the money nor the bowl; but at last the messengers said: "Father Bernardine, you will not look at the money for yourself; but remember that by refusing it, you put our lives in danger. Not one of us will dare to return to the duke with the ducats or the golden bowl!"

The humble friar, too humble to be afraid of the duke, raised his eyes immediately to those of the anxious messengers: "My sons, come with me," and he led the way to the prisons. There,

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before the eyes of the messengers, he laid out the whole treasure in releasing the debtors. The messengers reported this act of disinterestedness to the duke, and his hatred of Bernardine was changed to the most affectionate veneration.

Bernardine was forced to accept places of trust and dignity in the order; but, after a few years, he begged to be released and returned to his old missionary life. It was upon one of these laborious missions that he was seized by a fever. No sooner was he confined to his bed than this saint prepared himself for death by all the rites which the Church has in reserve for her children in that solemn hour; and becoming speechless soon after, he made a sign to be taken from his bed and laid upon the floor. With this act of humility he closed his pure life; lifting up his eyes to heaven, and breathing out his soul to God, in the sweet odor of sanctity, on the 20th of May, 1444.

Will you not turn from the beaten road between Rome and Florence, to visit the places made dear and sacred by Saint Bernardine of Siena? Or, when you are in Rome, will you not pay a visit to the chapel of Saint Bernardine of Siena, on the right hand of the front entrance to that church close by the capitol, which is called Ara Cœli? For there you will find his life pictured on the walls by the pious artist, Bernardine Pinturicchio; as we can believe, all the more admirably, out of love for the patron whose name he bore.



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SAINT CYRIL OF CAPPADOCIA.

"SOME change has come over our Cyril of late," said Theodora to her husband Fabius; "some change which I cannot understand. He seems perfectly well, and even more amiable than usual; but he takes no pleasure in things that have always interested him. What I have noticed, especially, is, that he cares nothing for the pageants and games on high festival days. He used to be so fond of all the processions, now he never goes to the temples when there is a solemnity, and even excuses himself when I ask him to go with me; I cannot imagine what ails the child."

Theodora was a fond and most indulgent mother, always fancying that her children were sick. Fabius, therefore, paid no attention to what she was saying, until he heard her complaint that Cyril no longer wished to attend the sacrifices offered in the temples to the gods. As soon as he heard this, Theodora had his whole attention. "What were you saying about Cyril—that he never asks now, as formerly, to go to the temple, and even excuses himself when you ask him to go?" said Fabius, fixing a look of full meaning on Theodora.

The poor mother saw that she had raised some terrible suspicion in the mind of her husband; she knew, too, that he was a severe man, although in most things, a kind father. Trembling with fear lest she had brought some misfortune on her darling son, she re-

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plied; "Yes; that is what I said; but Cyril is so gentle and so obedient that I am never inclined to force him, when for the moment he shows any backwardness in doing what I wish. Perhaps he has not been quite well."

"To-morrow is one of the days sacred to Venus," sternly resumed Fabius, without noticing Theodora's apology in favor of the boy. "Tell Cyril to make ready to accompany you to the sacrifices; if he refuses, I will know the reason why." And with a terrible frown on his brow he strode off to some of the amusements always going on in the gay city of Cæsarea in Cappadocia.

Theodora's heart sank within her. When she began to speak of Cyril and the singular change that had come over him, it was without a thought beyond the anxiety natural to a fond mother who sees her son growing fast from a mere child to a lad. That look given to her by her husband, put a vague terror into her mind. Living for her own household, she knew little of the outside world or of the course of public events. Fabius, on the contrary, was not only a man of quick intelligence but he mingled freely in the affairs of the city and even in those of the empire. Theodora was certain that he knew much of what she knew nothing, and that there was a dreadful meaning in the threat, "I will know the reason why!" "What have I done?" she exclaimed to herself; "to what dangers may I not have exposed a son so dear and so obedient! Why did I thus speak aloud my thoughts? But I may still prevent any serious mischief by speaking very gently to Cyril. He is open to persuasion, and if I ask him to go to the sacrifices out of love for me, he will not refuse."

Fabius had no occasion to remind Theodora of his command about Cyril. Early the next morning she said to her son: "Make haste now, my son, and go with me to the sacrifices; it is a great day, and everybody will be out. We shall find ourselves in a crowd unless we go early."

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"Do not mind me, dear mother," said Cyril, "I am not going to the sacrifices."

"You will not let your mother go alone, my son; make haste, as I said, for I shall soon be ready."

"But I *cannot* go, dear mother."

This was said in too firm a tone for Theodora even to pretend not to understand him, and she said: "You do not mean, Cyril, that you *cannot* go to the sacrifices if your mother wishes you to do so?"

"Anywhere else, dear mother, but not there."

"And why not there, Cyril? Remember, your father will call you to an account if you refuse to go to the sacrifices. Only last evening he bade me take you with me, saying: 'If he refuses to go I will know the reason why.' Now my son, do not distress me by an unwilling obedience not only to my wishes, but to your father's express command. You know how implicitly he expects to be obeyed, and you also know how severely he punishes a fault of this sort; therefore, my dear son, do not grieve your mother by any foolish resistance to his will. I really care nothing for the sacrifices myself, and would quite as soon stay at home as to go; but we must do something for the sake of peace at home my son," and she kissed him tenderly. "So, make haste, and let us go without delay."

"Listen, mother," said Cyril. "I have never disobeyed you since I came to the age of reason, knowing right from wrong; now I refuse your request because I must obey God. My worship belongs only to the one true *God who made heaven and earth and all that in them is.* I cannot sacrifice to idols, thus giving them the worship due to God, not even to please the dearest of mothers or the most exacting of fathers. Do not urge me, it will only make me refuse you again."

Theodora did not urge him; she wrung her hands in the anguish of her heart. "O, my son, my son, to what dangers are

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you exposing yourself! to what heart-breaks are you condemning your unhappy mother! I dare not stay from the sacrifices myself, and I dare not go without you; have pity on me, my son!"

The watchful eye and ear of Fabius had lain in wait for Theodora as well as for Cyril. He knew the indulgent spirit of the mother and he suspected that under the perversity which she complained of in the child, there was a revolt against the idolatrous worship in the temples; and this was a sin against the state in that age of the emperors. The moment, therefore, that Theodora uttered her cry of entreaty, Fabius entered the room.

"How is this, my son? Is it possible that you refuse to accompany your mother, and are thus guilty of disobedience?"

"Do not blame him, Fabius," pleaded Theodora, placing herself between her husband and her son.

"Hush, weak woman!" sternly replied Fabius. "It seems that you have failed to win his obedience, so it is time for me to use my paternal authority. Then turning to Cyril he said: "Make not a moment's delay; go to the temple with your mother, or leave your home never to return to it."

"I cannot sacrifice to idols, neither can I be present at the sacrifices offered to them. To God alone——"

"Silence, rash boy! Do not dare to question the worship of your gods. Go this instant with your mother, or you shall, this instant, leave the house of the parents whose rule you despise, be cast on the world, exposed, as you will find, to the punishments inflicted by the emperor's command on all those who refuse to sacrifice."

"Then it must be so, my father," replied Cyril, mildly. God has said, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou adore.*

"By all the gods of Olympus, Theodora, I believe we have cherished a Christian reptile in the shape of Cyril!" exclaimed Fabius, white with anger.

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"By the grace of God, dear father, I am a Christian," said Cyril, with the same calm voice.

"Begone!" shouted his father; and as if afraid Cyril might linger, he caught him fiercely by the arm, hurried him to the outer gate and cast the child from him as he would have cast off a viper. The only backward look given by Cyril was to his mother, as she sank in a heavy swoon to the floor. Without an instant's delay the child—we must call him a child, for he was not more than ten years old—ran to the house of Saint Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, who lived in the deep retirement necessary for a Christian bishop in those days of persecution. When the bishop saw him, he took the boy in his arms and blessed him, while tears ran down his cheeks. "Have courage, my child," he said; "Jesus will take care of his lambs as well as of his sheep. Stay with me, my son." "That I cannot do, for I should only bring sorrow upon all the Christians of Cæsarea. Why, father, I shall be tracked and hunted like a little rabbit," said Cyril, with one of those bright smiles which we imagine belong only to merry days. "Do not fear for me; did not Jesus, the Christ, say, *Fear not them who kill the body?* I have your blessing; it is all that I came for. I did not fly to you for shelter. Let me go now; only bless me once more, my father." The boy knelt down close to the feet of the holy bishop. For one moment those consecrated hands were laid on his head with a loving pressure that sent a thrill of joy through his young soul; then he arose quickly, kissed the amethyst of the ring on the third finger of the bishop's right hand, and was gone like a flash of white light from the room.

Bad news, it is said, flies quickly. Certain it is that Cyril might have been sent from his father's house upon any charge of wickedness possible to his age, might have wandered as a truant over the city of Cæsarea for days, without exciting remark; but, as soon as it was known that he had been spurned from his fath-

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er's gate as a Christian, the whole power of the Roman Empire was turned against the defenceless child. In fewer hours than one would have believed possible, the news had been carried to the ears of the governor himself. An imperial officer was dispatched to find Cyril, and soon returned with the little fellow to the governor's house. This Roman governor was well acquainted with Fabius, and knew his little son Cyril as a bright, curly haired, gentle boy, the very last one to be cast out of his home. Therefore, when Cyril was brought before him, the governor received him not only kindly but affectionately; patted his head, caressed his cheek, and then chucking him playfully under the chin, said: "What does all this mean, my lad? They tell me that you refused to go with your mother to the sacrifices this morning; you will hardly object to going with the governor of Cæsarea," and here the governor laughed in a jolly sort of way as if such a thing were not possible. "This way, my lad," and he took Cyril's hand, as if they would walk on together. But the small hand in the large hand of the governor had something very unyielding in it; it even drew back, and the childish voice spoke out very clearly, though very sweetly: "No doubt you mean kindly, but I cannot go to the sacrifices even with the governor of Cæsarea."

"Cannot go to the sacrifices! and pray tell me why?"

"Because to join in the worship offered to idols, is an insult to God who has said: '*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou adore.*'"

"Who has put all this nonsense into your head, that you, a mere child, cannot worship the gods of your country, like your father and mother, and all who have gone before you?"

"The Church of Christ teaches men to adore the one true God?"

"But what is the Church of Christ that she should teach you to despise the gods of Rome?"

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"The Church of Christ is my teacher, because by the grace of God and Jesus Christ, his Son, I am a Christian," answered Cyril.

"I believe the Christian babes would turn from their mothers' breasts, to speak the name of their Christ if they were questioned," said the governor, turning to his friends in attendance. "But what," he continued, "is to be done with this mere child, calling himself a Christian? It goes against one's heart to carry out the edicts in such a case; and yet if he is allowed to grow up in this way"—

"Give him a sight of the torture," said one; "put a screw on one of his thumbs, and he will soon yield."

"Look at me, my lad," said the governor; "since you will not go with me to the sacrifices, let us take a short walk to the wing of this building, where there are toys made on purpose for Christians, and a bed on which they stretch just such little boys as yourself."

"Oh, yes," said Cyril, "I have heard all about them; I will go with you *there*."

"Not so fast, my lad! you may not fancy those toys so much as you think."

Cyril said no more, but walked cheerfully beside the tall governor, until they came to the room where so many Christians had borne the torture for love of that Jesus who had died for them. His heart beat triumphantly in his young bosom, for it seemed almost too much to believe that *he* was to give such testimony for his Lord. The awful darkness was relieved, even at mid-day, only by small, high windows, and torches were flaring in the deep recesses. Cyril did not draw back, nor did he shudder. Seeing his intrepidity, the governor took a thumb-screw, saying: "Hold out your thumb, my lad!" Cyril held it out, the screw was set, and the governor made one turn. The lips of the child turned ashy white, but he raised his eyes to heaven. and said aloud: "I thank thee, O Jesus, because thou hast not despised me, a mere

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child, but hast allowed me to suffer this pain for Thee!" The governor turned to those who had followed them, and witnessed this strange scene. "Do you hear this? You cannot frighten these Christians. They are beyond the reach of torture as well as of flattery. I will not take the blame of releasing him, much less of torturing him. Call the guards!" The guards were immediately at his side. The governor spoke to them in a low voice, telling them that Cyril was not to be punished if he could be frightened into submission; and then he was led away to the tribunal of the judge. The governor's message was given to the magistrate in a low voice. Having heard it, he looked sternly at Cyril, and pointing to an executioner who stood ready, with his sword, to carry out the sentence of the judge, said: "Promise to sacrifice to the gods, and you shall be restored to your parents and brothers and sisters. When you are a man, you will be rich and honored; but refuse to sacrifice, and that sword leaps from its scabbard to take your life."

"If, for the love of Jesus Christ, I give up my parents and my home, Jesus Christ himself will be to me more than father or mother, brothers or sisters, or home. If, for the love of him, I give up the honors and riches of this world, he will give me heavenly riches, and a place among his dearest friends; and, as to death, I do not fear it, because, through death alone can I enter upon the life that never ends."

"Bind him," said the judge, in a loud voice, to the guards, "and cast him into the bonfire which they are kindling on the square for Christians."

Cyril was led out of the hall to an open public square. There he saw a huge bonfire, blazing and throwing out a great heat. The guards led him straight up to the flames and with terrible looks, said: "Promise to go to the sacrifice, or we will throw you headlong into the flames!"

"The only flames I fear are the flames of hell, where those

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who sacrifice to idols, denying the living God, will burn forever."

Finding that they could not frighten him, the guards led him back to the judge. This man, who had condemned so many to torture, and to death, for refusing to sacrifice to idols, still felt his heart melting within him at seeing the young Cyril face danger and death with such an innocent courage. "My child," said the judge, "you have seen both the fire and the sword. Remember that the emperor's command spares neither youth nor old age. Be wise. Promise to go to the sacrifices, and return to your father's house this very hour."

"How can I fear either the fire or the sword, and not rather fear him who can cast both body and soul into hell, and who has said, *Whosoever shall deny me, before men, him will I deny before my father who is in heaven?* Do not delay. Of what use to talk longer with such a child as I am!"

The very guards, accustomed, as they were, to every sort of cruelty, shed tears when they heard these words from the courageous and holy child. Seeing their tears, he said: "You would rejoice and laugh with me, instead of weeping thus, if you but knew who is my hope—if you but knew how glorious a kingdom I am going to take possession of. For Jesus, the Christ, is my hope, and with Jesus I shall reign forever."

"It is useless," said the judge, "to talk longer with this child. The sooner it is over the better. Sir," said he to the executioner, standing with his naked sword in his hand, "see that you take off that boy's head at one stroke;" and left the tribunal.

A few paces from the door of the court-room, in the yard that surrounded the building and with the full sunlight of the 29th of May shining upon it, the guards made a pause. With a quick movement they formed a circle round the child, whose fair locks hung round a face beaming with a supernatural joy. Kneeling on the bare stones, he clasped his small hands in a rapture

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of expectation, rather than of prayer. There was a flash of bright steel in the sunshine, and, at one stroke of the executioner, the young head was cropped, like a beautiful flower, from its stalk!

Who can describe the frantic anguish of Theodora, when all this came to her ears; or who can describe the stony whiteness of the face of Fabius? There was a hasty gathering up of the innocent remains of the child-martyr, and under the cover of night they were given into the hands of Saint Firmilian—those hands which had, only a few hours before, given him the blessing that strengthened him for his martyrdom.

Afterwards, the holy bishop wrote the *Acts of Saint Cyril;* wrote them with tears of pious joy and gratitude on his cheeks; because, *out of the mouth of babes* God had been glorified in Cæsarea of Cappadocia.

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SAINT BONIFACE.

ONE evening in the year 685, a company of Benedictine monks might have been seen approaching, on foot, the gate of one of the noble manors in Devonshire; that province in the southwest of England which "took its name from the deep hollows where the apple-blossoms clustered as thickly then as now, and the clematis," or Virgin's bower of our own American meadows and hedges, "wove its garlands," of starry whiteness, "in as wild profusion."

The lord of the manor received these weary and foot-sore monks, not only with hospitality but with reverence; for they were not traveling for pleasure, nor even to find a place for some new monastery of their laborious order; but preached, as they traveled, to the neglected population of this wild district. The monks were from Exeter, which once deserved the name of Monkton, from the number of religious houses of which it was justly proud; and they had found their way as far as Crediton, a name which you will find, on a good map of England, in Devonshire. The guests refreshed, they were ready to return the kindness they had received, by relating to their noble host the pious news from Exeter and the Christian world; and, so gentle was their aspect, so kind were their voices, so simply, yet so eloquently did their narratives run, that Winfrid, the little son of the hospitable lord and but five years old, left his play, not only

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to look at the good monks as a curious child might do, but lingered near them to catch every word which fell from their lips. The next day the guests departed, but they took with them the heart of little Winfrid. From that evening, he sighed for nothing but the habit and cowl of his Benedictine friends. It was the boy's day-dream, his air-castle, to be a monk in the cloisters of Exeter.

When his father would say to him, seeing, by his little plays, how his fancy ran upon the hooded friars: "What will Winfrid be when he is a man?" the little Winfrid would always answer with a beaming smile: "A Benedictine monk in Exeter." Still his father took it all as a childish notion; all very well, indeed very pretty in its way; for how could a child of five years know what he would like to be when a man! But it became a serious matter when Winfrid was no longer an infant, but a boy growing fast to youth with a quick mind, charming manners and a fair countenance. Then his father had had his own dreams for Winfrid, had looked forward to the time when his son would take his place among the lords of the land and even increase the glory of his house. He saw the boy clinging to his dream of the cloisters, and he spared nothing to wean him from it. He gave him masters at home in the gentle sciences, but he trained him, also, to all the accomplishments of a young lord; hoping that he would outgrow his childish fancy. At last, however, Winfrid found courage to ask his father's consent to go to Exeter.

"Why do you not ask me, as you used to do, my father, what I would be when a man?"

"Why should I ask you, my son? There is but one path for you, and that is to continue, and even add to, the dignity of the noble house whose name you bear."

"Ah, my father; you know well that you are speaking from your own wish, not from mine; and you know that if you were

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to ask me the same question you asked me so often when I was a child of five, I should give you the same answer."

"But, my son, you are still young."

"Not too young to wear the light yoke of a boy in the cloisters of Exeter."

In vain did his father use every means but his commands, to turn his mind. At last, the good nobleman made a virtue of necessity and took Winfrid to his old friends, the Benedictines, at Exeter. There he applied himself with such ardor to his studies that the monks said, one to another: "The noble youth must not be dwarfed by staying with us; he must go to Nutscell, and there, the learned abbot, Winbert, will satisfy his thirst for knowledge." So, to Nutscell, in Hampshire, he went; and there, under Abbot Winbert, who loved him as his own son, he learned poetry, grammar and the sacred sciences, as became an accomplished and pious Benedictine. Soon, too, the abbot gave him a chance to use all his learning, by teaching not only the monks but the nuns in that part of the world; for the Benedictine nuns did not make ignorance a part of their rule, any more than did the Benedictine monks. They promised to give up their own selfish wills, to give up the happiness of living among their own families and they gave up all their riches when they had any; but they did not promise to give up nor were they expected to give up, their love of true knowledge and innocent accomplishments; and the nuns, as well as the monks of southern England, learned to write verses under the instruction of Winfrid.

By and by, Archbishop Bretwald of Canterbury (this was almost two hundred years before Saint Dunstan was archbishop of Canterbury),* and Ina, king of Wessex, found out what a treasure Abbot Winbert was holding in his hands at Nutscell, and they determined to raise Winfrid to so high a dignity that the abbot, much as he loved him, could not keep him in the quiet monas-

*See Saint Dunstan, First Series of "Patron Saints."

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tery among the pleasant and green groves of Hampshire. But Winfrid had never said, when a child of five, in the beautiful old manor of Devonshire: "I will be a bishop or an archbishop." He had always said: "I will be a Benedictine monk," and a Benedictine monk, not bishop or archbishop, he was resolved to be. But the heart of the child, which had dilated and taken in all the grandeur of a religious vocation at five years, had continued to grow among the studious occupations of a monk and scholar in the seclusion of Nutscell. He had his dreams there; and, though no mitre or crosier flitted before him, it was a dream worthy of his noble parents on their domain among the grand old forests and sunny openings and blossoming orchards of Devonshire; for this dream was, to carry to Saxony, the German Saxony from which they came, still inhabited by a pagan people, the blessings of the Christian faith which they had found on the shore of Britain.

Winfrid had almost as much difficulty in getting the good old abbot's consent to go to Germany, as he had to get his father's consent to go to Exeter. But he finally succeeded, and the young missionary, whose soul was on fire to follow in the path of the few noble-hearted monks who had already entered on this perilous labor, after visiting Rome, and obtaining the authority and blessing of Pope Gregory II., in order to carry on his great work successfully, actually made his way to Saxony and Hesse. On his journey from Friesland to Hesse, he stopped at Treves, on the river Moselle, where King Dagobert II. had founded a monastery. He was as hospitably entertained at Treves as the monks of Exeter had been at Crediton in "leafy Devonshire," and there was a pair of greedy ears waiting for him there, to drink in the story told by the monk who had made learning so pleasant to the young in the cloisters of Hampshire and its region; and a fervent young heart, with whom to will and to do was one and the same.

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After Winfrid had said mass in the monastery, the abbess invited him to take breakfast with her and her family; and her grandson, Gregory, a boy of fifteen, who had just come from the court school, was called to read aloud the Latin Scriptures, according to custom, during the meal. Gregory knelt and received the holy missionary's blessing, took the volume, and read in such a manner as to deserve praise. "You read very well, my son," said Winfrid, "that is, if you understand what you are reading." Gregory answered modestly, that he did understand what he was reading, and was about to continue, when Winfrid interrupted him: "What I wish to know, my son, is, if you can explain what you are reading in your native tongue." Gregory hesitated a moment—cast his eyes on the fair Latin page, and then, looking from it straight into the kind eyes of Winfrid, who knew, like an old teacher, the heart of a boy so well: "Father, that I cannot do; but will not you do it yourself?" "Begin again, then," said Winfrid, "and be careful to read distinctly." And this being done, Winfrid delivered to the abbess and her community, a discourse so sublime and so touching, that, when they rose from table, Gregory made all haste to get the ear of his grandmother, and asked permission to follow their guest that he might learn the Scriptures from him and be his disciple.

"How foolish!" said the abbess, "he is a man of whom we know nothing; I cannot tell you whence he comes or whither he goes."

"I care nothing for that, grand-mamma, and if you will not give me a horse I will follow him on foot."

There was something in all this, as the abbess could see, unlike the willfulness of a headstrong youth. In those days, people believed in heaven-inspired vocations; and this conviction, more than Gregory's importunities, prevailed with the abbess whose widowhood was thus entirely given to God. She allowed him to accompany Winfrid, and together they journeyed into Thuringia; that

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country made sacred, centuries after, by the virtues of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. We find Gregory one of the cherished disciples of Winfrid, and he had afterwards scholars and disciples of his own, who loved him as he had loved the Exeter Benedictine; and the charming history of Gregory, who became a saint, and his pupil, Luidger, would make a story by itself. It was this Luidger, who, when a child, would leave his companions to their sports, and would busy himself with picking the bark from the trees, perhaps the white-birch bark of our own woods, and making up little books. When he returned home after these holidays in the woods and his mother asked, affectionately: "What has my little son been doing all this bright day?" he would look up with a beaming face, and answer: "Making beautiful books!" · "But how can you make books, my son, when you can neither read nor write." "God taught me," he would say, with a deep smile. Gregory was so fond of this dear boy, who was always reading, singing or praying, that when he was old enough to leave him, he sent him to England. There he was a pupil of the great scholar Alcuin, who always called him "son," and the good monks all loved him so dearly that they felt obliged to excuse themselves for it saying: "Really, we cannot help it: any one must love Luidger." The great emperor, Charlemagne, finally heard of Luidger, and sent for him to come back to Germany. By that time his dear old master, Gregory, was dead; and Luidger, when he was consecrated bishop in Saxony, made a home for himself, which he loved above all others, in the midst of the huge virgin forests on the banks of the river Rura. Having found out this secluded spot, the bishop and his companions pitched their tents and prepared to clear away trees enough to give room for a few huts. What was their dismay, when they looked at the massive trunks, the growth of centuries, with their branches so interlaced that they could not catch a glimpse of the sky and so tall that they seemed to touch the clouds! They determined to wait until

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morning before beginning their task. Meanwhile, Luidger knelt down under the largest of the mighty oaks, and was soon rapt in devotion. It was then a clear and beautiful night, the moon and stars unclouded in the heavens. Gradually the clouds gathered, the winds rose, a furious tempest burst over the forest. The monks heard the crash of the lofty trees, and trembled with terror. It seemed as if world was crushing world. When the storm ceased and morning came, they saw the giant oaks prostrate on every side of them, leaving a cleared space, large enough for their monastery. One tree alone remained untouched; it was that under which Luidger knelt and prayed.

When we get amongst these grand, simple-hearted, large-brained, middle-age saints, it is hard to know where to stop. No romance reads so swiftly as the story of their courage, their piety and their faith which removed mountains. And all this story of Gregory and Luidger came from the little incident which, as I have told you, happened at the breakfast table of a monastery in Treves.

So great was the success of Winfrid in preaching to the Germans, that the pope, Gregory II., heard of it, and called Winfrid to Rome, where he was made bishop of the whole of Germany. At that time too, as it is generally believed, he took the name by which he has ever since been known; which is Boniface; that name so justly dear to the German people, as the name of Patrick must ever be to the sons of Ireland. Under the sacred inspirations of his high office he returned to Germany, followed the course of its great rivers, the Rhine and Danube; trod with his own impetuous feet the wilderness of Hesse; until he found, in the ancient Hercynian forest, the huge "thunder oak" which the poor pagans of that country had consecrated to Jupiter; cut it down and built a wooden chapel to the living God out of its timbers, on the very spot where the town of Geismar now stands. Within twenty years after Boniface began his mission, one hundred thousand pagans had forsaken

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their idols and had received Christian baptism; and still the work grew under his hands. The harvest, he saw, was all white for the reapers, but who should gather it in? With this question laboring at his heart, the great missionary wrote letters to the bishops and abbots of England; letters in which every word was a flame to kindle in the breasts of his countrymen a love of souls. A noble band responded to the call, among whom were the future bishops and saints of the country they went to save; save by means of Christian teaching and the Christian sacraments. Having, with the aid of his zealous companions, founded churches and monasteries, his next care was for schools—public schools, where faith would be learned, not overthrown. In every place where he planted a colony of monks, he opened a school, in order, not only that the young monks might be instructed, but, that the rude population by whom he was surrounded might be trained in the holy laws of the Church, and their rough manners softened by the gentle influences of Christian learning.

All this time a lively correspondence was kept up between the missionaries in Germany and the monks in England. While the English kings and bishops send books and altar-plate to Germany, and the English nuns send supplies of needed clothing, Boniface sends a chasuble, "not all of silk but mingled with goats' hair," and linen cloth, at a time when linen was not made in England. In a letter from Boniface to the abbess, Eadburga, he begs her to send him the "Acts of the Martyrs;" and in her reply, which is written in Latin, she tells him, that with the book, she has sent him fifty pieces of gold and an altar carpet. Then, encouraged it would seem by her generosity, he begs her to get written out for him, either by herself or her scholars, the Epistles of Saint Paul in letters of gold, in order to inspire his converts with a great reverence for the Holy Scriptures; and as soon as he receives this precious volume, he sends to Eadburga a silver pen.

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It was one of the spiritual daughters of Eadburga, Saint Lioba,* who finally made known to him her relationship; and a most faithful affection was ever after maintained between these cousins. It was to his cousin, Lioba, that he made an appeal in behalf of the German women, in the year 748; when, Eadburga having been called to Rome, the wise and gentle Selta was abbess of Wimbourne. And the appeal was not lost; for from that time, the lives of Saint Boniface and of Saint Lioba ran on, together, towards heaven. You will also see how Saint Boniface esteemed those holy, courageous, yet gentle-minded women, who knew how to be strong and laborious women, without being the least bit in the world masculine; and who knew how to be gentle and refined and poetical, without being dainty or sentimental.

Boniface was now growing old. He had seen three popes on the chair of Peter; he had seen kings come to the throne and die; he had seen, in a word, all the uncertainty attending human things, and how the kindness of one ruler is often followed by the indifference, if not actual unkindness of the one who succeeds him. In this strait, seeing himself already seventy-five years old, and anxious for the preservation of all the churches and monasteries and schools which he had established by the blessing of God and the help of his associates, he wrote a letter to King Pepin, to secure his protection for his churches, his clergy, monks and scholars. Then he appointed, with the permission of Pope Zachary, Lullus, as his successor; and all these arrangements made, he again turned missionary; the young fire still burned bright in his old heart. With a joyful countenance he said to the lay brothers; "Prepare all things for my journey; and do not forget to enclose with my books, a shroud for my mortal remains."

He would not leave his old home in Mentz, without seeing his cousin Lioba and bidding her farewell; and, when he wrote to

*Saint Lioba. See First Series of "Patron Saints."

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Lullus to make ready a tomb for him at Fulda, he also told him to leave a place beside him for Lioba. Having no riches to leave to her, he gave her for his parting gift, his monk's cowl, as a token of his regard for his kinswoman. He then set out with an Anglo-Saxon monk, named Eoban, whom he had consecrated bishop of Friesland, his old missionary ground, accompanied by fifty-one companions, of whom two were priests; sailed down the beautiful Rhine and came to Friesland. His voice had lost none of its charm to pagan ears, nor had his zeal cooled in the service of God. The heathen population flocked to hear him, and their pride melted like wax under the ardor of this aged servant of souls. Seeing so many ready to enter the fold, he appointed the 5th of June for the day of their baptism. A tent was pitched on the banks of a river not far from the small town of Dockum. But while the saint waited for his little ones in Christ with the patience of a father, his companions, keeping watch for their approach, ran to the tent in breathless haste with quite other tidings: "Oh, father, it is not a company of your followers we see coming; but a band of fierce pagans, with their shields and spears!"

The heart of Boniface must have yearned, almost to breaking, over the unbaptized ones whom he was thus to leave without the sign of the Church on their foreheads, but, conforming himself in all things to the will of God, he made no complaint. The laymen in his company would have resisted the barbarians, but Boniface said: "Forbear my sons; the scripture teaches us to return, not evil for evil, but rather good. So now the long expected day has at last arrived; the time of my departure is at hand. Be comforted and fear not those who can, indeed, destroy the body, but who cannot touch the immortal soul. Trust in God and rejoice in him who will give you a place with the angels, in his own glorious mansion." While he was still speaking the barbarians struck him to the ground. As he fell, with

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the instinct of self-preservation, he raised the hand which held the book of the gospels over his head. A second stroke from one fierce pagan cut through the book while another pierced him to the heart, and the rest of the band fell upon his companions and brutally slaughtered every one.

The ruffians had hoped to capture rich spoils; and bitter was their disappointment when they found nothing but relics and books, which they scattered contemptuously in the fields and marshes near the spot, where they were afterwards found by the converts of Saint Boniface and preserved. Some of these books are still to be seen at Fulda; among them the book of the gospels which he held in his hand, the pages stained with his blood. His body was first carried to Mentz, but afterwards to Fulda, where may still be seen the ivory crosier he was in the habit of using and the dagger by which he shed his blood as a Christian martyr. And this is the story of Winfrid, the little boy of Devonshire; who at five years old declared that he would be a Benedictine monk at Exeter.



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SAINT COLUMBA.

"IT was a strange fancy in a grand-son of the great King Niall to name a son Columba! Mark my words. This boy has the soaring wing of the eagle rather than the meek one of the dove, for which he has been named;" and the old retainer of one of the noblest houses in Erin shook his head, as if the boy was a puzzle.

"But you forget," answered another servant of the same house, "you forget the dream of our noble and even royal mistress, before the birth of this Columba. The dove of the Holy Spirit may be said to have a tongue of fire. In some such way, this dove of the house of Niall, may have the strong wing of the eagle. But he will not be a bird of prey. Mark this."

"I remember hearing about the dream; how his mother saw a veil strewn all over with flowers of a marvelous beauty and the most varied colors. Then she saw this veil unroll before her eyes, until it covered the distant plains and even the wooded mountains; when an angel stood before her, saying: 'You will be the mother of a son who will bloom for heaven like the flowers on this veil; he will be counted among the prophets of God and he will lead unnumbered souls to the heavenly country.' You

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see, that according to this vision he is marked out for a leader, an eagle rather than a dove."

The little fellow, born in 521, who thus occupied the time and the tongues of his father's liege-men, was one to hold their eyes also. Of a beauty which was as much of the soul as of the body, he charmed all who came near him by a certain gentleness which tempered the fire of his disposition. Swift to anger, his wrath was oftener roused in defence of some creature weak and oppressed, than to maintain his own pride or self-will. But with all this, his parents saw there was need of a firm hand to train this noble spirit; and therefore, while still very young, he was put under the care of the priest who baptized him. With this good father, he led a life of such Christian innocence, that his angel guardian often became visible to him and talked with him. One day the little boy asked his celestial visitor if all the angels in heaven were as bright and shining as himself? It was the same angel guardian who asked him, a few days after, which, of all the virtues of a good Christian he would most like to possess? The young Columba, with a face almost as glowing and beautiful as that of the angel, replied: "Chastity and wisdom." Immediately three young girls appeared to him, all of a wonderful beauty, unlike any he had ever seen; and all three advanced towards him as if to caress him. The pious youth, full of virtuous anger, frowned upon them and pushed them from him with actual rudeness. "Ah!" they exclaimed, "is it possible you do not know us?" "No," replied Columba, with energy, "I do not know you at all!" "We are three sisters, whom our father has sent to you as friends." "But who is your father?" "Our father is Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world." "Truly, you have an illustrious father, but what are your names?" "We are called Virginity, Wisdom and Prophecy; and we have come to live with you always, and to love you with a most holy love."

From the atmosphere of such a home, Columba was sent to one

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of the greatest schools in Ireland, where the only teachers were monks. Nor did they teach merely what was necessary for priests and monks, but everything needed by people living in the world. Yet, in this school he took his first steps in the life of a monk. He devoted himself not only to study and prayer, but to that labor of the hands, which the monks of those days thought necessary to a religious life. Like all his young companions, he was expected to grind at night the corn for the next day's food. But so quickly was this done, with such a cheerful good will, that his mates used to say: "O, Columba's guardian angel grinds his corn for him!" We can believe that even when a boy, Columba did "with his might whatever his hand found to do."

Columba finished his education under two saintly abbots of the same name, Finnian. The first was a bishop as well as an abbot, and ordained Columba as deacon. But he was still longer under the care of the second, who had been educated by a disciple of Saint Patrick, and had lived for a long time with Saint David. It was thus that Columba came into possession of all the monastic practices and maxims of the apostle of Ireland. In this school, called Clonard, where Columba was educated, lived an old bard, to whom the abbot showed every kindness and who loved the abbot in return as a friend and benefactor. It was one of the delights of Columba to listen to the bard as he sang his songs to his Irish harp; and he studied the art of poesy with him, so that he might be able to sing the praises of God and of his beloved island of Erin. One day when the aged poet and his pupil Columba were reading together in the grove of the monastery, a young girl appeared, running towards them for protection from a cruel robber. The poor child tried to hide herself under their long robes; but the robber, neither pitying her weakness nor respecting those with whom she sought shelter, struck her with his lance through the neck and

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then turned away without remorse, leaving her dead at their feet. The horrified bard turned to Columba, and said, "How long will God leave unpunished this crime which dishonors us?" "For this moment, and no longer," said Columba; "for this very hour, when the soul of this innocent creature goes up to heaven, the soul of the murderer will go down to hell." At this same instant the cruel robber and assassin fell dead. The news of this swift punishment went over all Ireland, and the fame of Columba spread far and wide.

Before Columba was twenty-five years old, he was the founder of monasteries. In Ireland, as many as thirty-seven could claim him as their father. The first of these was Durragh, where a cross and well, named for Columba, are still to be seen. But Derry was his home, which he specially loved, and to which he addressed himself in very sweet poems; for Columba was not only a friend of poets, he was a poet himself. In one of these poems, he says:

"*Were all the tribute of Scotia mine,*
From its midland to its borders,
I would give all for one little cell
In my beautiful Derry.
For its peace and for its purity,
For the white angels that come and go
In crowds from one end to the other,
I love my beautiful Derry.
For its quietness and its purity,
For heaven's angels that come and go
Under every leaf of the oaks,
I love my beautiful Derry.
My Derry, my fair oak grove,
My dear little cell and dwelling."

With this love of poetry, came a love of seeing it beautifully copied on the parchments of those days; that *vellum*, on which

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the "fair writers" wrote in such elegant characters, and on which the artists painted such wonderful initial letters and exquisite pictures. Not only did he admire the writing of others, but he made, with his own hand, three hundred copies of the gospels and the psalms. Not satisfied with this, he went everywhere in search of precious manuscripts, in order to borrow or copy them. When this request was denied he was sure to resent it bitterly. Thus, his love of books, so worthy of praise and even of imitation, became a snare to his soul; and finally, was the occasion of all the great troubles of his life.

Once, when on a visit to his old master, Finnian, he tried to get permission to copy the good abbot's favorite psalter. But for some reason, Finnian did not see fit to grant it. Determined to make a copy in secret since he could not do so openly, he shut himself up at night in the church, where the psalter was kept. He was discovered, however, and the saintly old abbot, who regarded the work as a theft, claimed the copy when it was done. Columba's hot temper rose up against what he thought the injustice of his old master, and he refused to give up his psalter; refused so stoutly, that the abbot and the monk could only agree to lay the matter before the king at Tara. This king, whose name was Diarmid, was descended, like Columba, from king Niall; and no doubt the monk expected his royal kinsman to decide in his favor. But the king gave his sentence in a rustic phrase, which passed into a proverb in Ireland—*to every cow her calf;* and, so, to every book its copy. Columba protested against the king's decision, and even threatened to avenge his wrong. In this threat began Columba's sorrows, but, also, his sanctification; for it was through contrition, that Columba was to become a saint.

Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. When Columba determined to be avenged of his royal kinsman, the wicked one, "who goes about seeking whom he may destroy,"

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soon put Columba in mind of his determination. A young prince who had committed a murder unintentionally, took refuge with Columba, the father and superior of so many religious houses. In those days, it was the custom to respect the asylum thus given; but Diarmid, irritated perhaps by the complaints of his cousin, had the young prince seized and put to death. The anger of Columba knew no bounds. The king tried to detain him a prisoner, after his threats of vengeance, but he escaped to his native province of Tyrconnel, and stirred up the descendants of Niall in that region against the reigning king. In the fierce struggle, Diarmid was beaten and obliged to take refuge at Tara. This victory was due, as the historians of that time assure us, to Columba, who prayed that heaven would punish the insolence of the king in violating the right of monasteries to shield the innocent. Besides, Columba was present at the battle, and declared, before all men, that he would take the responsibility of the blood shed there.

Columba was victorious. But another battle was before him; a battle with himself. He was accused before an ecclesiastical court, of shedding Christian blood; and although he was absent, sentence was pronounced against him. No sooner did this come to the ears of Columba, than he made all haste to face his accusers and the judges who had condemned him unheard. When he appeared under this heavy disgrace before the ecclesiastical court, the famous Abbot Brendan, founder of the monastery of Birr, rose, went forward to meet him and embraced him. "How can you give the kiss of peace to an excommunicated man?" exclaimed several members of the synod.

"You would do as I have done," replied the abbot, "and you would never have excommunicated him had you seen, what I now see; a pillar of fire, which goes before him, while angels walk at his side. I dare not treat with contempt, a man predestined by God to be the guide of an entire people to eternal life."

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In the course of the examination the minds of the synod were changed. The sentence of excommunication was withdrawn; but Columba was charged to win as many pagan souls to the faith as there had fallen Christians in the battle of Cool-drewney. At this sentence, a flood of light seemed to have been thrown upon the conscience of Columba, hitherto darkened by resentment. His contrition was as intense as had been his desire for revenge. With untiring anxiety he went from one holy person to another, to obtain an assurance of the safety of those who had fallen in a battle brought about by his vindictiveness; and also for advice in satisfying the justice of God towards himself. The light which he sought so earnestly, was found, at last, with a holy monk named Molaise, famed for his study of the Scriptures, and who had been already his confessor. This monk confirmed the sentence of the synod, obliging him to win as many pagan souls to the true faith as he had sent Christian souls to judgment; but added to this a penance, which was a sword of grief in the heart of Columba; for it condemned him to live, his life long, an exile from Ireland; never again to look upon its shores, even from that shore on which he might take refuge. Thenceforth his life was to be one of expiation, and he was to preach the faith among a nation not his own. His "beautiful Derry" was to be the joy of others, but not of the one who loved it so well and had sung its praises so sweetly. The love, too, of kinsmen and friends, so warm in the heart of Columba, was to be mortified by a perpetual absence; and of the multitude of monks to whom he had been a superior and father, only twelve were to be the companions of his exile.

At the age of forty-two, Columba set forth on his voluntary exile. Embarked, with his twelve companions, on one of the large boats, made of osier or willow branches and covered with hides, in which his countrymen sailed over those stormy northern seas, he steered north and west for the shores of Scotland, then

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called Caledonia. There is a legend, that he touched, first, upon the island named Oransay; but having landed and climbed a hill, and found, that by turning his eyes southward, he could still discern, on the far horizon, the line of the Irish coast, he returned to his boat, setting his prow steadily northward. Reaching at length the bare, bleak island of Iona, he again disembarked, climbed the highest summit, but saw no longer his loved Irish shore. This, then, was to be his home; nor could the bleak winds sweeping over the desolate isle, nor the chilling mists driving up from that turbulent northern sea, nor the horrors of the rocky coast, shake the resolution of Columba.

From the time he set forth on his exile of expiation, we are told, "this man so passionate, so warlike and vindictive, became, little by little, the most gentle, the most humble, the most tender of friends and fathers. It was Columba, the great head of the Church in Caledonia, who, kneeling before the strangers who came to Iona, or before the monks returning from their work, took off their shoes, washed their feet, and after he had washed them, respectfully kissed them." In the midst of the new community which soon flocked around him, Columba lived in a sort of hut built of planks, on a high spot overlooking his spiritual family, their cells clustered around his own. From this fact, the island took its name of I-Colm-Kill, the Island of Columb-Kill. This name of Columb-Kill, means *Columba*, or dove, and *killes*, or of the cells, as the Irish call the cells of their monks; and by this name of Columbkill, the abbot of Iona is better known than by any other; alluding to the great number of monks whose cells he so kindly overlooked. On the hard floor of this cell he slept to the end of his life, with no pillow but a stone; and this cell was also his study and his oratory. It was here that he gave himself up to the prayers which filled the community with awe for the man who thus spent his nights with God. It was to this cell that he returned from his labor in the fields, side by side

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with the least of his monks. It was here that he carried on the copying of the Holy Scriptures which had been the delight of his youth, and which ceased only with his death; and it was in this cell that he received his visitors from foreign shores. The cove where Columba landed on the Island of Iona, is still called the "Bay of the Osier Bark," *Port a Churraich;* and a long, narrow hillock is shown there as giving the dimensions of the bark. He did not settle here, however, but planted his monastery on the eastern shore of the island, so as to front the great Isle of Mull; whose mountain summits are among the clouds. On this eastern slope, the little colony built huts of osier branches; and these osier branches with the strong reeds of the brooks, supported by long stakes driven into the ground, gave the materials for their principal buildings and even their chapel; while climbing plants, above all the ivy, entwining themselves among the rushes, adorned and even strengthened the modest shelter of these brave missionaries. It was not until long after, that the monks who came to Iona from Ireland had houses of wood; and then they were obliged to bring the timber from more fertile islands than their own.

But what of Columba, the poet, who had learned his art from the old bard of Clonard? He still put his sorrows and his longings for Ireland into verse; and in verse he envies his dear friend, Cormac, who can return to his dear monastery of Durrow, and listen to the voice of the wind among the oaks, the chant of the blackbird and the cuckoo. "What delight," he sings, "to course over the sea with the white waves, and to see the billows break on the beaches of Ireland! What delight to row in a little skiff and to land in the midst of the white surf on the beaches of Ireland! Ah! how swiftly my bark would fly, if its prow was turned towards my oak-grove in Ireland!" "Carry with thee, young voyager," he exclaims, as if addressing some guest on his return to Ireland, "carry with thee, noble young man, my prayer

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and my benediction for Ireland, which is seven times blessed!" One morning towards the last of his life, he called to him one of his monks, saying: "Go, sit on the shore of the sea, upon the beach of our isle to the west; and there you will see, coming from the north of Ireland, a poor stork, long buffeted by the winds, and which, exhausted by fatigue, will come and fall at your feet on the shore. Take it up tenderly; feed and nurse it for three days. After these three days of rest, when it has regained its strength, it will not remain an exile among us; but will fly towards sweet Ireland, the dear country of its birth. I commend it to your care, because it comes from the country where I too, was born." Everything came to pass as he said. When the monk returned with the bird in his arms, Columba asked him no question, but said: "Dear child, God will bless thee because thou hast cared for the poor exile. In three days he will be seen returning to his country." And in truth, at the end of three days the stork rose into the air in the sight of Columba and the monk; paused a moment on his extended wings, as if seeking for his way through the air; then flew towards the sea and towards Ireland. The sailors among the islands of the Hebrides still repeat this story of Columba and the stork.

But if the heart of the missionary was so tender towards the sufferings of a storm-tossed bird, how it went forth to meet souls, buffeted by sorrows, above all by temptations! To those who braved the rough seas of the coast of northern Scotland and among the islands, in order to visit the abbot on this barren isle, barren even of rocks, he gave, always, a welcome. Some came out of curiosity; to see the man who ruled his old monasteries in Ireland, although an exile. Others came to join the austere community he had gathered around him, whose labors were relieved by long prayers and vigils, or with study and the transcribing of the sacred books; while others still, came to learn from this great penitent the science of holiness; how to

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master their temptations or how to make reparation for their sins. Nor was their way made easy by Columba. He knew that the virtue of the Christian should be as heroic as the courage of the sailor who drove his bark among the foaming waters of the headlands of the coast, or of the warrior on the field of battle; and the most timid left Columba inspired to practice virtue as they saw it practiced at Iona and by its abbot. But the very hardness of his penances seemed to draw men to his feet. At all hours of the day, the monks of Iona heard loud calls from the other side of the strait which separated them from the Isle of Mull; and these calls were signals from those who begged for a boat to take them to Columba, as penitents or postulants for his community. Iona was like a hive sending out its swarms of missionaries trained under their strict master. Three hundred churches and monasteries, in Scotland and Ireland and the neighboring isles, can still be traced back to Columba as their founder. He made long and dangerous voyages in every direction but towards Ireland, preaching the word of God and confirming the confidence of the pagans by his miracles. When Bruidh, king of the Picts, determined not to see the Christian missionary, shut himself up in his castle near Inverness, Columba was not disturbed. He made no parley with porters or guardsmen, but marching straight up to the great gate, he made on its two doors the sign of the cross, struck it with his clenched right hand, and the bars and locks flew back of themselves, the two doors swung open on their hinges, and Columba entered as a conqueror, into the very presence of the king and of his counsellors. Seized with affright, they thought only of winning his favor, spoke peace to him, and made over to him, as an everlasting possession, his poor little Isle of Iona. But this only enraged the Druids or priests, for it was against them and their idols that Columba preached; and what a noble presence stood before these Druids! Many of these Druids were more vener-

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able by their age; and their long white beards resembled the moss which hung from their ancient oaks. But even among these men Columba was venerable; not by reason of years or of his white beard, but by reason of a wonderful beauty and grandeur of soul and body. Tall above all who came near him, his voice was as sweet and as far sounding as that of a silver bell. Of a princely dignity of manner, he still drew all hearts towards him by the cordiality of his speech and the open palm which he held out to them; and the Druids and their superstitions vanished before him. If they had declared a fountain or stream accursed, so that he who drank of it was sure to die, Columba drank full draughts of it before the eyes of the people. If a child of a Christian fell sick and died and the Druids declared this affliction a punishment for leaving the pagan rites, Columba, like the prophet of old, would not leave the child nor cease his prayers and tears, until the child was restored to life and to the arms of his parents. When his hearers were strangers to his language, he preached through an interpreter, but always with the same wonderful success. As swift in his love for souls as he had been swift to anger, his voyages and journeys were never measured by his strength but by the necessities of those to whose aid he flew. Once, when already old, as he was toiling on foot along the shores of Loch Ness, he said to his companions: "Make haste and go on to meet the angels who have come down from heaven and wait for us at the bedside of a Pict. This man has lived to an extreme old age, and has been faithful to the natural law of virtue. We must secure his salvation by giving him baptism before his death." Then, hastening his own aged steps, he came to a lovely valley, called to-day Glen Urquhart, and there he found the old man as he expected. By this time Columba had learned the language of the Picts; and began without delay to instruct the sick man, who listened with joy, received baptism and died with the sweetest serenity, attended by

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the angels as foreseen by Columba. Thus we see that the three sisters, Charity, Wisdom and Prophecy, remained with him as they promised him to do in his youth.

This gift of prophecy never deserted him. Once, he found a young man, born in Ireland, bound as a slave to one of the Druid priests. No sooner did Columba see this, than he implored the Druid to free his slave, but to no purpose; when Columba, with all the majesty of a prophet of God, said to the Druid: "Know, O Broichan, that if you refuse to free this stranger, made a slave, thou wilt die before I leave this kingdom." This said, he left the Druid and walked towards the shore of Loch Ness. But hardly had he reached it, when two courtiers sent by the king overtook him, announcing to him that Broichan had met with a terrible accident and declared himself anxious to free the young Irish slave. Columba stooped down, picked up a pebble from the beach of Loch Ness, which he blessed; then gave it to two of his monks, assuring them that the sick man would be cured if he drank of the water in which this pebble had been dipped; but this would take place only on condition that he freed his slave. This was done immediately, and the captive returned, as the stork had done, to his native country. It was in such a spirit of active charity that Columba planted small chapels and monastic homes beside the clear waters of Caledonia, among her mountains and glens and rocks.

One of the zealous missionaries of Columba, was Malruve, a near relative, descended, also, from king Niall. For fifty-one years he was abbot of a community at a spot now called Applecross, upon the northwest shore of Caledonia, looking out upon the Isle of Skye, where he died, a martyr under the spears of Norwegian pirates. Another disciple was named Drostan, from Ireland. On a headland near this same shore of Caledonia, Columba wished to raise a monastery, but the chief refused to give him the land. Immediately his son fell sick unto death. The

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chief, struck with remorse, sent messengers to Columba, giving him the spot he had asked for, and begging him to pray for his dying son. Columba and his monks prayed, and the boy lived. The monastery was built, and when Columba had blessed it, he prophesied that whoever should profane this monastery would be vanquished by his enemies or soon die; then he put Drostan at its head, and prepared to leave him. But Drostan, who was rich in merits and could fast and pray and perform sharp penances, could not see his dear old master in virtue and piety leave him without tears. And so many fell from his eyes, rolled down his cheeks till they dropped on his coarse habit, that Columba said: "We must call this the Monastery of Deir," or *tears*. And this is still the name of the renowned monastery which, as a great writer has said, "has existed a thousand years on this same spot, as if to prove that they who *sow in tears shall reap in joy*."

But the prophecy? After the Reformation, King James II. of England, taking it from the monks gave the Monastery of Deir to the chief of the house of Keith. In vain did the wife of this lord entreat him not to accept the sacrilegious gift. He would not listen. The next night she dreamed that she saw a vast company of monks, clothed like the monks of Deir, surround the principal castle, the Craig of Dunnotyr, standing on a lofty rock on the sea shore. The monks set about demolishing the rock, but with no other tools than penknives. The poor lady, in her dream, tried to find her husband; but when she came back, found the rock destroyed by the penkives of the monks and only pieces of the furniture of the castle floating on the sea! The dream was believed to mean the punishment which would overtake this family, even if it came as slowly as the overturning of the rock by the blades of penknives, and certainly, from this moment the grandeur of the noble House of Keith dwindled, until it disappeared in the rebellion of 1715.

Living on a mere speck of land in the midst of a boisterous

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sea, Columba and his monks knew no fear of wind or waves. Sometimes their boats were made of the trunks of trees hollowed out; but, generally, they were made of willow branches covered with skins. The size of the boat was told by the number of skins used to cover it. Some were so small that two skins only were used, and these could be carried from place to place, and it was one of this size which the abbot, Columba, often used in going from one lake to another, when preaching to the Picts. But there were others large enough to bring heavy timbers from other shores. They had sails and oars, with masts and rigging like our ships, and in the course of time the Island of Iona had a fleet of boats, manned and steered by monks. The prayers of Columba for his monks, for all who were exposed to the dangers of the sea, were believed to have saved many a boat from shipwreck. His distress when a storm overtook some skiff or boat with its freight of precious lives, found vent in prayers which which seemed to compel the mercy of heaven to interfere in their behalf. For this reason, he is invoked to this day, by those struggling amid deep water and stormy seas.

But this man who founded monasteries, navigated a rocky coast, steered his bark of willow branches and skins in the midst of storms, who preached to pagan Picts, subdued Druid priests, prayed back the dead to life, was not merely a poet himself; he loved and protected the poets, or bards, as they were then called. When king and counsellors waged war against these children of song, Columba came to their defence. "Why root up the wheat with the tares?" he said. For, who would sing fitly the praises of God, of his angels and saints, if the bards, idle and good, were driven from the land? The gates of the castle might be shut against them, but never the gate of one of Columba's monasteries. Born a poet, he was a poet to the end of his life, we are told, and he counted the bards as the friends of God, the songsters of the church, and therefore beloved by Columba.

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Have you ever seen some child whom everybody called stupid, dull-eyed with a thick tongue? There was such a little boy in one of Columba's monasteries. He was called "a scholar;" but he was so stupid, that instead of trying to teach him, the monks set him to work and made him a drudge. One time, when the abbot visited this monastery, the poor little stupid scholar crept in among the crowd pressing around the beloved abbot, and touched the skirt of his habit with profound veneration. Columba felt this peculiar touch and gesture of the child, turned around, put his arms about the child's neck and embraced him. Every one cried out, "Do not mind this little fool!" "Patience, my brothers," said Columba. Then speaking to the boy, who was trembling from head to foot with fear: "My son, open your mouth and show me your tongue." The child obeyed, trembling more and more. The abbot made the sign of the cross upon his thick tongue, then said to those standing around him: "This child, who appears to you so contemptible, henceforth let no one despise. He will grow in wisdom and virtue each day; he will be counted as the greatest among you. God will give to this tongue, which I have now blessed, the gift of eloquence and of true doctrine." The boy grew to be a man, and was famous in all the churches of Scotland and of Ireland, where he was venerated under the name of Saint Ernan.

Through his whole life, Columba had the liveliest sympathy and was a daily companion, with his monks who labored in the fields. When he was too old to join in their labors, sitting in his hut, he would interrupt his studies and lay down his pen to bless the monks as they came from the fields, the pastures, the barns. The young monks, after they had milked the cows of the community, would kneel down, with their pails full of new milk, to receive the abbot's blessing. One evening, during one of the last summers of his life, the monks, returning from reaping the scanty harvest of their isle, stopped short as they came near the

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monastery, each one seeming to be overcome by some tender emotion. Baithen, the steward of the monastery, the friend, and, as it proved, the successor of Columba, broke the silence, saying: "Are you not sensible of something unusual?" "Yes truly," replied the oldest among them; "not only this evening, but on every evening at this hour and at this spot, I breathe a delicious perfume, as of all the flowers in the world; a feeling of warmth, as from a fire which does not burn but gently warms; and in my heart a joy so unusual, so incomparable, that I no longer feel disgust or fatigue. The sheaves which I carry on my back, be they ever so heavy, no longer bend me down; from here to the monastery they seem to be lifted from my shoulders. What does this mean?" Each one related a similar experience. "I will tell you," said the steward, "what it means. It is our old master, Columba, always full of anxiety for us, who disquiets himself at our late return, is tormented at the thought of our fatigue, and who, no longer able to meet us in the body, sends out his spirit to refresh, console and rejoice us."

Age never cooled the ardor of Columba's desire for perfection; never lessened his fear of sin. To the very last years of his life he gave himself to penance, to mortification, as if he had great temptations to meet, great sins to overcome. There was no indulgence in ease, in repose, and he gave himself up to prayer by night until his cell seemed to draw the very angels from their thrones in heaven. One night in winter—the terrible winter time of that sea-girt isle in the northern ocean—a young monk had remained in the church after the other monks had gone to their cells. Presently, in the absolute stillness and darkness of the night watches, with no light near but the lamp of the sanctuary, he saw the venerable abbot enter the church alone. And directly before him, like that same pillar of fire which the Abbot Brendan had seen before him when he had entered the synod to defend himself against an unjust sentence, went a

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golden tinted light which rose the entire height of the sanctuary, filled every corner of the humble edifice, even to the small side choir where the frightened young monk had tried to conceal himself. This light was even visible to those outside; and it was found to be the same as that seen from Columba's cell where he often spent his nights in prayer. All these signs of perfection led the community to believe that the term of his life was approaching. But to ward off this calamity, they set themselves to prayer for the continuance of a life and an example so precious. One day two of his disciples, who were with him in his cell assisting him in his labors, saw his countenance change, and express emotions, now joyous, now sad; and this in a way so remarkable, that they threw themselves at his feet, entreating him to make known the revelation they were certain he had received from heaven. At first he refused to answer them, but finally said: "Dear children, I do not wish to afflict you. But know, since you insist upon it, that to-day it is thirty years since I began my pilgrimage to Caledonia. For a long time I have asked my God to allow me to finish my exile in this thirtieth year, and to call me to my celestial country. When you beheld me so joyful, I already saw the angels who had come for my soul. But suddenly they paused upon a rock of the sea which surrounds our isle, as if they wished to come to me but could not. And they cannot; because the Lord has less regard to my prayers than to the prayers of the many churches praying for me. For these have obtained, against my desire, that my sojourn in this body be prolonged four years. This was the cause of my sadness. But in four years I shall die without any sickness. In four years those angels will return, and I shall take my flight with them to my Lord."

At the end of these four years Columba arranged everything for his departure from this world. It was towards the last of May, and he wished to take leave of the monks as they worked in the

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field. As his age did not allow him to walk this distance, he was drawn on a car by oxen. When he came to the laborers he said, "It was my desire to die on the paschal Sunday, but this would be to change a feast into a day of sadness for you. For this reason I have preferred to wait a little." Seeing all of them in tears at this, he tried his best to console them. Standing in his rustic car and turning towards the east, he blessed the island and all its inhabitants. According to tradition this blessing, like that given to Ireland by Saint Patrick, freed the island, forever, from the vipers that infested it.

On Saturday of the week following this visit, leaning upon the arm of his faithful attendant, Diarmid, he went to visit and bless the granary of the community. Seeing there two large bins of corn, remaining from the last harvest, he said: "I see with joy that my dear monastic family, if I must leave them this year, will not suffer from famine." "Beloved father," said Diarmid, "Why then sadden us by speaking of your approaching death?" "Ah, well," replied Columba, "here is a little secret which I will reveal to you, if you will promise, on your knees, to tell no one of it until after my departure. To-day is Saturday; the day which is called in holy writ the Sabbath day, or the day of rest. And it will be to me, truly, a day of repose, for it will be the last of my laborious life. This Saturday night, and before Sunday, I shall go in the way of my fathers. You weep, dear Diarmid, but be consoled. It is my Lord Jesus Christ who condescends to invite me to go to him; it is he who has revealed to me that I go this very night."

Leaving the granary in order to return to the monastery and having walked half the road, he was obliged to sit down and rest himself, at a spot still marked by one of the ancient crosses of Iona. At this moment he saw running towards him an aged and faithful servant, the old white horse, employed to carry every day from the dairy yard to the monastery, the milk which nour-

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ished the brothers. The animal laid his head on the shoulder of his master as if to take leave of him, and his eyes had so plaintive an expression that they seemed bathed in tears. Diarmid wished to drive him off, but the aged patriarch prevented him, saying: "This horse loves me; leave him near me; let him weep my departure. The Creator has revealed to this poor beast what he had concealed from you, a reasonable man." Where upon, caressing the animal, he gave him his blessing. This done, he found strength enough to climb a knoll, from which he could see the whole island and the entire monastery. Standing on this spot, he spread out his two hands in order to pronounce over the sanctuary which he had raised, a prophetic benediction: "This small spot," he said, "so low and so narrow, will be greatly honored, not only by the kings and the people of Scotland, but by stranger chiefs and barbarous nations; it will be venerated even by the saints of other sanctuaries."

Returning to the monastery, he went again to his cell and sat down to his work for the last time. He was there occupied in copying the psalter. Coming to Psalm xxxiii., and to the verse: "*They that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good,*" he stopped and said: "It is here that I must end; Baithen, write the rest." This was the same Baithen who was the steward of Iona, and was afterwards abbot. Columba then went to assist at the vigils of Sunday within the church; returned to his cell and seated himself on the bare stones which served this man of more than seventy years for a bed and a pillow, and which were shown for a century after at his tomb. Thus seated, he confided to his one companion a last message for the community: "Hear, dear children, what I recommend to you by my last words. Let peace and charity, mutual and sincere, reign among you. If you act thus, following the example of the saints, God, who strengthens the just, will help you; and I, who will be near him, I will call upon him for you; and you shall obtain from him,

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not only enough of all the necessaries of this present life, but those recompenses of the life eternal reserved for those who keep his law."

This said he never spoke again. But hardly had the midnight bell given the signal for the matins of the feast of Sunday, than he rose and ran more quickly than any of the monks to the church, where he knelt before the altar. Diarmid followed him; but as the church was still dark, he could follow only by feeling his way, and cried after him in a plaintive voice: "My father, where are you?" He found him lying before the altar, sat down beside him, and raising his venerable head laid it on his knees. The whole community soon arrived with lights. At the sight of their dying father all wept. The abbot opened his eyes and threw to the right and to the left a look, full of a serene and radiant joy. Then, assisted by Diarmid, he raised his right hand in order to bless, silently, the whole choir of monks. His hand fell; he had breathed his last sigh. The majestic figure rested before the altar surrounded by his faithful religious, like that of a man who had fallen asleep while beholding a celestial vision. This was on the 9th of June, 597 of our Christian era. The traveler who now visits the desolate island of Iona, finds only the ruins of the monastery of Saint Columba, or of Saint Columbkill. The Irish cross, which looks like a cross on which hangs a crown of thorns, marks the spots made forever dear by the steps of the holy abbot. Of all the photographs of noted abbeys and ruined churches in the sister isles of Ireland, England and Scotland, none have a more solemn charm than that which gives a view of the ruined abbey of Saint Columbkill. For many a century the kings of Scotland asked to be buried on this desolate island of Iona, that their bones might rest at the feet of Saint Columbkill; and though his relics no longer hallow the ground, every stone on its barren soil, the very cry of its sea-birds and

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the wild dash of the ocean waves on its shore, will be dear and sacred to the children not only of Ireland and of Scotland, but of the church in all lands and among all people; nor will they ever forget to invoke the prayers of Saint Columbkill, the *Dove of the Cells.*

NOTE.—Four of the most beautiful fac-similes in the collection known as "The National Manuscripts of Ireland," are from the Psalter on vellum, styled Cathach, ascribed to the hand of Saint Columba, and preserved in an antique metal casket known by the name of *Cathach*, or Battler; being the one secretly copied from the favorite Psalter of Saint Finnian, which cost, in the end, so many lives in battle, and sent Columba into a religious exile. In the same collection are two illuminated pages from "The Book of Durrow," by the same hand.



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SAINT CYR.

"MY good Syra," said the lady Julitta, "let us make ourselves and little Cyr, ready for flight. Domitian, the governor, is growing more cruel every day. No mercy is shown to a Christian; and my beautiful boy, how can I expose him by exposing myself? Have everything ready for this very evening and tell Clementina that she shall not be separated from her dear charge, for I will take her with Cyr."

When evening had settled over the city of Iconium, in Lycaonia, Julitta, the mother, Cyr, her infant son, only three years old, and her two maidens, Syra and Clementina, passed out of the patrician house with all its splendors. There was no grand chariot at the door, as on other occasions when Julitta had taken Cyr for a drive, or to spend a few weeks in their villa among the mountains. The very quietest way possible had been chosen; lady Julitta and her little company must escape form the city unnoticed now. There had been no packing of costly robes or jewels for their mistress, by Syra or Clementina; no beautiful garments for the young heir of that noble house. Of royal blood, the grand-daughter of illustrious kings, Julitta tried to look like one of the people. She was dressed in a robe coarser than her maids had ever worn; and now all three were dressed

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alike. To look at them, as they walked along the narrow streets of Iconium, no one would have suspected that Julitta was the mistress of the others. Clementina carried Cyr in her arms because, being more accustomed to walking with a burden, she would do so more naturally. They chose one mode of journeying or another, as seemed most likely to speed them on their way without being recognized. At length they reached Seleucia, in the province of Celicia, which lies next to the province of Lycaonia. Here they found a home among some Christian friends; but to Julitta's disappointment, they told her that Alexander, the governor of Seleucia, was as fierce a persecutor of the Christians as Domitian.

"Syra," said Julitta, the very night they arrived at Seleucia, "my good Syra, we are no safer here than at home. God knows I do not fly for my own sake, but how could I leave my child to be brought up by a pagan? No, this must not be; we will go still farther, and God will show us his own way of escape out of these sore troubles."

The next morning saw them journeying towards the city of Tarsus, another town in Celicia; the same Tarsus where Saul had lived—Saul, who was afterwards Paul of the Gentiles. By this time Julitta had become accustomed to the hardships of the way and, besides, it was a comfort to her to hold her amiable little son in her arms; therefore Cyr was almost always with her, instead of being with Clementina. He had already been taught to bless himself, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;* and he would bow his beautiful head with the most tender reverence whenever he heard spoken the name of *Jesus.* His dimpled knees knew how to bend in prayer, and the innocent eyes turned to heaven with the liveliest devotion, or closed, as if his very soul went up to God as he prayed. As Julitta pressed this dear child in her arms, and laid her cheek to his, she prayed that she might "live to see him bear witness to

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the Christ; and then," she whispered, "then let me follow him to the court of the King whom I long to serve." Whenever Julitta prayed thus, it seemed as if little Cyr understood all that she said in the ear of God; for he would lay his small hand on hers, as if to say: "May it be so, my sweet mother!"

In this way they journeyed on, the mother and the child becoming more and more to each other every hour, and having that understanding between each other which little children and their mothers often have. But when they came to the gate of the city of Tarsus, they found themselves in the midst of a crowd; in a few moments, too, they found that the crowd had come together to bring Alexander, the governor of the province, into the city. They saw him sitting in his chariot of state, drawn by noble horses in gold and silver trappings. His eye ran over the whole crowd, fixed itself on Julitta and the child in her arms; and then turning to the officer seated with him in his chariot, he said: "Do you see that patrician in a plebeian dress with a child in her arms? She must not escape us this time. It is the lady Julitta, of Iconium; she has vast estates in her own right and she is a Christian. Her name was on the list of suspected persons in Iconium, but she was nowhere to be found. They tracked her to Seleucia, but she vanished from there as suddenly as she had come; and now that I see her among the crowd, she must not be lost sight of. Send word to the bailiff, and have her seized immediately." No one thought of disobeying this powerful governor in all the pomp of his office, just entering the city. As soon as Julitta saw Alexander, she was certain that the time had come for her to confess her faith and to die for it; but all dread, even of parting from Cyr, and all anxiety for him, had gone from her heart. She had only time to whisper a few words softly in his ear, when a rough hand was laid on her shoulder, and a coarse voice said: "I arrest the lady Julitta as a Christian, in the name of the emperor!"

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Syra and Clementina were good maidens, and they really loved their mistress and their young master; nevertheless, when they saw the officer lay his strong hand on Julitta's shoulder, and arrest her in the name of the emperor, they were struck with terror, hid themselves behind the crowd that was around them and finally fled into some place of safety. Thus Julitta and Cyr were left alone.

The governor was in too much haste to condemn Julitta and seize on her vast estates, to make any ceremony about it. She was brought before him as soon as he had come to his house and could ascend the tribunal, still holding in her arms the child Cyr.

"What is your name?" asked the governor.

"Christian," said Julitta.

"What is your rank?" he asked.

"A Christian!" she replied.

"And your country?" he continued.

"I belong to the kingdom of Christ!" again answered Julitta.

"Take that child from her arms!" said Alexander, gruffly, to the sergeant who had arrested her. Julitta did not wait to have her little son taken from her, but set him down gently on his feet, and gave him a sweet look, which he understood and returned.

"Lady Julitta," said the governor, "do not think to hide your disgrace by such answers. The blood of illustrious kings runs in your veins, and has been degraded by you, as a Christian. If you were ignorant, or of mean birth, this name of Christian might suit you; now it makes you not only a traitor to your country, but to your race. You are not worthy to hold in your arms the child that calls you mother."

At the word *mother*, the little Cyr stretched out his hands fondly towards Julitta; but the governor only said, "Come to me, child," and then raised him up in his arms and set him on his own knee. The child only struggled in the arms of the gov-

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ernor, who caressed him, and even tried to kiss his cheek, saying: "I have some little playmates for you; and if you keep quite still for a few moments you shall have something very nice to eat." But the more the governor talked to him, the more uneasy little Cyr became, reaching out his hands continually to his mother. "What a lovely child!" said one of the crowd. There was always a crowd when a Christian was before the tribunal. "What a noble child!" said another. "Do you see, he does not cry, like other children when taken from their mothers; he only holds out his hands to her and looks beseechingly at the governor in a way that does honor to his illustrious birth. One who can ask a favor with so much dignity and sweetness, would grant one with the grace of a crown prince."

But the governor paid no attention to the beseeching look of the young eyes, and only held the child a little more firmly, saying to Julitta: "Disown the name of Christian, which disgraces your family and separates you from your son; his tender age, and the innocence of his looks, should wean you from your folly."

"This child, whom you would make a temptation to me, has been baptized in the name of Christ. How, then, can I separate myself from him by disowning the name of Christian?"

"Rash woman! Do you think to drag your child with you in your disgrace? Lash her to the rack, and whip her with thongs!" cried Alexander to the executioners.

This was no sooner said than done; and the blood started, that instant, from the tender veins of Julitta. With a bound, little Cyr sprang towards his mother, but a look from her subdued him, and he sat quite still, with his large eyes wide open, his lips pale, and his hands clasped on his little bosom, as he kept watch of all that was done to his mother. Seeing that Julitta did not shrink under this torment, the governor shouted: "Blaspheme the name of your Christ, O Julitta, as you love your life, and the son to whom you have given life!"

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But Julitta, stretched on the rack, with the heavy lashes tearing her flesh till the blood ran in crimson streams from every part of her body, spoke out in a calm, sweet voice: "By the grace of God, I am a Christian!"

Until this time not a syllable had been spoken by our little Cyr; but when he heard his mother say, "I am a Christian!" he threw up his infant hands to heaven, and said, in a high voice, as clear as the tinkle of an altar bell: "*I, too, am a Christian!*"

There was a hush through the large hall for one moment; but Alexander, stung to the quick at seeing himself conquered by an infant of only three years, cried out: "Young viper! dost thou hiss like thy mother? Then die like her!" and, taking Cyr by the feet, in the height of his inhuman fury, dashed his head against the edge of the highest step of the tribunal, so that all the place where he stood was sprinkled with the infant's blood.

If there was a hush of admiration when the holy child bore witness to his faith in Christ Jesus, there was a hush of horror when they saw the brutal revenge of Alexander. The very executioners sickened at the sight; until Alexander, foaming at the mouth more like a wild beast than a man, ordered the relics of the infant to be carried out of the city, and thrown among the carcasses of criminals.

As to Julitta, the last sting of martyrdom was gone; for had she not seen her little son giving up his innocent soul to God, with the name of *Christian* on his lips? The tyrant ordered her sides to be torn with hooks, and burning pitch to be poured on the gaping wounds; but Julitta no longer felt these torments invented by a fiend in human shape. When she saw him dancing, in his rage, around the rack upon which she had been chained, calling upon her to deny her Lord and Redeemer, she only answered, in a serene voice: "I do not sacrifice to devils, nor to dumb and deaf statues, but I worship Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, by whom the Father hath made all things."

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It was after all this that the cruel Alexander, despairing of her death by torture, commanded her head to be struck off. She was led to the place of execution, and there she knelt down and prayed aloud, thanking God for giving her son a place in his kingdom, and asking the same favor for herself. As she said "*Amen*," the sword of the executioner severed the head of Julitta from her body.

When the news of all this went abroad over the city, Syra and Clementina sorrowed greatly; perhaps they felt ashamed and conscience-smitten at having left Julitta and her child when arrested, but now they resolved to do what they could to secure their precious relics. They succeeded at last, and the lady Julitta and the infant Cyr were buried in one grave, in a field near the city of Tarsus, in the year 304. When Constantine, the Christian emperor, had once more given peace to the Church, Clementina made known the place where the blessed martyrs reposed. Immediately all the faithful of the country were eager for some little portion of their precious bones, regarding them as protections against the spirit of evil; while multitudes glorified God by visiting their tomb.

In Rome, the *Station* for the 16th day of June, is at the Church of Saint Cyr and Saint Julitta. The guide-books give us no clue to its history or even where it is to be found. The *Diario* says merely, "Saint Cyr and Saint Julitta his mother, at their church;" and the stranger in Rome trusts to the driver of any vettura on the street, to find this spot which the Church herself holds in such honor. It is found in a crowded quarter of Rome, but is marked to the eye by an angle which brings out the portal beyond the buildings around it. The rays of the late afternoon lighted it up as we entered, to find everything solemn, and beautifully decorous. The Romans are seen here, but very few strangers, and the air of devotion is undisturbed. There was something unspeakably touching in this hush. We had time

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to look at all the decorations, none of which seemed new; but above all at the altar piece, representing the martyrdom of Saint Cyr; with his fair, infantile face, so full of noble sweetness. And there was something as unspeakably touching, also, in the thought, that the Church had such a memory for the Acts of the least of her martyrs; treasuring on her altars the relics even of her babes in Christ; who, like her Holy Innocents, well deserve this invocation of the poet, Prudentius, in his hymn:

"Lovely flowers of martyrs, hail!"



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SS. GERVASIUS AND PROTASIUS.

ABOUT the year 62 of our Christian era, a citizen of Milan was walking rapidly along the streets of the still older city of Ravenna, Italy. He had been so wrapt up in his own thoughts and affairs, that he was in the midst of a crowd before he was conscious of it. This crowd had gathered in one of the open squares, before a so-called court of justice, until it had filled the street in front of the square. He might have been very impatient at the delay, if he had not heard the word "Christian" spoken again and again around him, and every time in a tone in contempt. After a few minutes he was quite sure that a Christian had been tried for his faith, and condemned to death. Then, to his horror, he was quite sure that the poor Christian was wavering.

"See!" said one, "he is ready to faint at the sight of death. These Christians are a set of craven-hearted fellows. A man must have been born a slave to stand and shiver and tremble like that, at the sight of a drawn sword!" "He is a coward!" said another; "the only question is, which he fears most, death or his Christ."

Vitalis, for that was the name of the stranger from Milan, could wait no longer. He made his way as quietly as possible through the crowd, until he found himself close beside the trem-

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bling victim of pagan cruelty. Instead of the usual lofty courage of the Christian martyr, Vitalis saw a man, Ursicinus, a physician and a person of note, actually livid with fear. He was afraid to deny his faith, and yet he was afraid of death; afraid of dying, although his Lord had said to all his followers: *Fear not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell.* Going directly up to Ursicinus, Vitalis laid one hand on his arm: "My brother, why do you hesitate? A moment of pain, it may be; but oh, what a reward! Do not lose one gem from your crown by a shameful dread of death; of death which must come, sooner or later, to all of us. Remember that he died for you, who now asks your life in return. Raise your heart to Jesus, the crucified one; and he will strengthen your courage, confirm your faith, and quicken your charity. It cannot be that you will deny him who died for you!" "Oh, no, no!" cried the unhappy Ursicinus, "already your voice restores me to myself; but pray for me." Then turning to his guards, Ursicinus exclaimed: "Why do you delay the execution of my sentence! Unworthy as I have proved myself of the name, I am still a Christian. With the help of Jesus Christ, my divine master, I will die faithful to him!"

"Give the Christian dog his way!" growled the near crowd. "Carry out his sentence!" shouted and yelled the more distant spectators. Their savage cry for blood was hardly over before the sword of the executioner had done its work. A few minutes more, and the crowd had dispersed; but the ready purse of Vitalis secured the attendance necessary to bury, respectfully, the body of the martyr.

No sooner, however, did a report of all this come to the ears of the pagan judge, Paulinus, than he ordered Vitalis to be seized and placed on the rack. "Since you are so fond of seeing

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others die for your Christ, it is only fair that you should suffer for him yourself," said Paulinus, mockingly.

"You speak only the truth," replied Vitalis; "the very same truth, too, which I have heard again and again, from my teacher in the Christian faith."

"And who, pray, has the credit of teaching you this precious nonsense, which is likely to cost you so dear?"

"Peter, the prince of the apostles, and the common father of the faithful."

"Ha! ha!" coarsely laughed Paulinus. "So you are one of Peter's fishes; caught in his Galilean net! An honor, indeed. How many turns of the rack do you propose to endure on the strength of his teaching?"

"As many as you please to order," replied Vitalis.

"At least," remarked Paulinus, "you have more manhood about you than that cowardly wretch, Ursicinus. He did not deserve the easy death of the sword; but it was as well to have it over. As for you, have you not served in camps?"

"I have served honorably in the Roman legions, under Nero," replied Vitalis; "but the king under whose banner I now serve, knows how to reward his followers as no emperor of Rome can ever do."

"Well spoken, my Roman veteran! We will give you a few turns of the rack—do not exult, however, for we shall not let you die—and then we shall give you time to think about the reward in store for you, when you have been put, *alive*, mind you, into a grave six feet deep, and slowly covered with earth and stones." The martyr bowed his head, while a bright smile hovered over his face. The rack was turned until only life remained, and then Vitalis was dragged to a place in Ravenna called the "Palm-tree." Here a pit was dug before his eyes, into which he was pushed ignominiously, and the earth and

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stones thrown over him, and stamped down, until the fury of the crowd had spent itself.

Valeria, the Christian wife of Vitalis, had accompanied him to Ravenna. After his death, she could not rest until she had set her face towards Milan, where her twin boys, Gervasius and Protasius, still needed her motherly care. The painful journey of the Christian widow was accomplished, as she thought. The fair palaces of Milan were in sight, when she met a crowd of half-drunken peasants on their way to some idolatrous festival. She tried to turn aside from the road, so as to be unseen until they had passed her; but they were not too intoxicated to notice her, and her wish to avoid them.

"You must be my companion in the dance," said one; "Come, give us a reel," he said, clutching her rudely by the arm as she turned from him.

"Ah! ha!" laughed a second peasant; "don't I know you, my Christian dame? It will not do to play the prude. We must have one dance together, in honor of Venus."

"Lord Jesus!" cried the Christian widow, "thou hast given to my husband the crown of a martyr. Do not despise thy poor handmaid!"

"Ha! ha! ha! so it is martyrdom you want! Then if you will not dance, you shall die!" And the whole crowd rushed towards her in their druken fury, beating her, until long after she was dead, with their heavy peasant cudgels.

The mild air of a May evening in northern Italy blew over the city of Milan, when the Christian youth, Celsus, knocked softly on the door of his aged and saintly friend and master in Christ, Nazarius. "Come in, my son," answered the venerable man, without rising from his knees; for he was familiar with the gentle knock of Celsus. "I knew you were at prayer, my father," hurriedly whispered Celsns, "but such strange news has come to my ears from the passers-by, that I was certain I ought to tell

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you without delay. The good Valeria has been murdered, just outside the city gates, by a crowd of drunken peasants on their way to a feast of Venus. What makes this still more grievous is, that her husband, Vitalis (so the story runs on the street), was buried alive for his faith, at Ravenna. Their good sons, Gervasius and Protasius"—

"Will need friends and counsel" — said the holy Nazarius, finishing the sentence begun by Celsus.

"Yes, my father."

"Lose no time, my son; but go this instant to our young friends, before the news reaches them in a rude way. Tell them that Nazarius needs them this very hour; and bring them to me along some quiet street."

Celsus kissed the aged hand of Nazarius, and flew, rather than walked, on the light feet of youth, to the house of Vitalis. He found the twin brothers, who returned with him to the house of Nazarius. From the gentle lips of this teacher of Christ, who was, one day, to seal his testimony with his blood, they learned the glorious tidings concerning both their parents. Large tears rolled down their young cheeks as they embraced each other, saying: "We need not pray for them; they are, even now, praying for us. We have only to follow in their footsteps to share their triumph and their happiness." Then turning to Nazarius, they said: "Henceforth, O good Nazarius, look upon us as your sons. Allow us to dwell under your roof. Sell our estates, everything we possess, and distribute the price to the poor of Christ's flock; to those orphans whom martyrdom has deprived of both parents in their tender infancy. For us, we have but one care: to live a life of poverty and of prayer, under your guidance. Do not refuse us. Protect us, not from Roman lictors or Roman mobs thirsting for Christian blood, but protect us from the society of the wicked, lest we fail of our heavenly crown!" How could Nazarius find it in his heart to refuse a request so ten-

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derly and so piously urged? "Stay with me, at least for the present," he replied; and from that night forth, the twin brothers lived with the aged Nazarius and the holy youth Celsus.

They had lived for six years in this holy intimacy. These years had bleached, to a still more venerable whiteness, the hair of Nazarius. They had ripened, too, the virtue of the youthful Celsus, and of the twin brothers, Gervasius and Protasius. Together they had grown in all the graces of Christian perfection; together they had performed works of charity and of mercy towards the poor, wherever found; together they had instructed the lambs of Christ's flock and had gone after the stray sheep, in that time of dire persecution. Many a time the end seemed near. Many a time they almost saw the crown of martyrdom; but again it was withheld. Every day, earth and its interests and its pursuits seemed less to them; every day, heaven seemed nearer and more real. Meanwhile, Nero's persecution went on. They had built for themselves a small oratory and house outside the walls, carrying the stones with their own hands. In this solitude they seemed to have been forgotten, when all at once Count Artesius, who shared the hatred of Nero towards the Christians, bethought himself of this white-haired old Christian and of his three youthful companions. He had caught sight of them, time and again, when he was engaged in some outrageous act of cruelty; for they were always at hand when Christians were in peril of faltering in their confession of faith. As soon as he had fully recalled these circumstances to mind, he sent his spies to watch the white-haired old man and the three youths. He was not obliged to wait long, before Nazarius, Celsus, Gervasius and Protasius were all brought before him.

"By what name do you call yourself?" he said, speaking to Nazarius.

"Nazarius, or disciple of Jesus of Nazareth!" replied the aged man.

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"Of what race are you?"

"My father, Africanus, was a pagan; but my mother, Perpetua, was a Christian and through her means I was baptized. I belong, therefore, to the race of Christians."

"And these youths, your companions?"

"Give them the privilege of speaking for themselves," said Nazarius; "they will not fear to do so."

"And you?" said Count Artesius, addressing Celsus.

"Like Nazarius, I am of the race and family of Christ."

"And you?" turning to Gervasius and Protasius.

"Of the race of Christians, not only by baptism, but by the inheritance of our parents, Vitalis and Valeria. Both gave testimony to Christ by their death. We are of the race and family of Christ's martyrs."

"As to you, old man, and your slender companion, we shall make short work of you; but there is too much bone and muscle in these tall youths to lose them so easily from the imperial legions. They would make splendid tribunes. Ho!" said the count to his guards; "take off the white head of this old man, and the fair one of the slender youth, as quickly as you well can!"

A bright glance of love and cheer passed between the four Christians; there was a touch, too, of the chained hands, as the aged Nazarius and the youth Celsus passed the twin brothers on their way to a quick death. The twin brothers were still before Count Artesius, when Nazarius and Celsus, just outside the Roman gate of Milan, passed, by the sword of the executioner, to a triumphant judgment. Already they had received the crown and the palm of the martyr; already were they interceding for the two brothers, still in the midst of their battle for Christ and the faith; while their bodies were carefully buried in separate graves, in a garden near at hand, by some good Christians.

No sooner were the brothers left by themselves with the count, than he began to tempt them with offers of preferment in the

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empire. They were led before a statue of Jupiter, and told how a little incense burned before the father of the gods would give them all which the ambition of youth could desire. When the count had finished this plausible address, both the tall youths looked on their chains, and then at the count; but it was Gervasius who exclaimed, in a transport of holy indignation: "Dost thou really think to persuade us to burn incense before this dumb image of a god, whom, as a man, we should despise for his vices?"

There was a terrible beauty about this young man, standing in chains before the chief magistrate of Milan, and defying his power. For a moment the count was awed, and he said: "Who, then, can claim your homage?"

"He to whom every knee must bend, in heaven and on earth; for, *at the name of Jesus every knee shall bend*, according to the words of his apostle."

At the bare mention of the name of Jesus, the count trembled with anger. He turned quickly to the lictors, who carried their bundles of rods and heavy clubs: "Beat down this proud youth, nor rest until the last breath has left his body!" His command was obeyed to the letter, the magistrate and Protasius standing by. When the barbarous murder had been committed, and the tall form, bruised and mangled, lay still and quite dead, the count turned to Protasius: "Unfortunate youth, learn wisdom from the fate of your brother! Why suffer yourself to perish miserably, as he has done before your very eyes?" But Protasius, who looked like another Gervasius, so perfectly did they resemble each other, answered: "Which of us two, O Count Artesius, is the unfortunate one? Is it I, who fear neither torture nor death, and whom you can never persuade or force to worship base idols? Or is it you, great magistrate of Milan, who will repent, when too late, that you have not known and adored the living God?"

"Lash him to the rack!" shouted the count.

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"You cannot please me better," said Protasius; "I pity your blindness, for you know not what you are doing. But finish what you have begun, so that I may receive the same heavenly reward which has been given already to my brother."

The count could not wait for the slow torture of the rack, when he heard this speech. "Strike off his head! I will hear no more from him!" and the young head fell, in another moment, at the feet of the tyrant.

As soon as it could be done safely, a Christian, named Philip, aided by his son, took up the bodies of the twin brothers and twin martyrs, put them into a stone coffin, and buried them secretly beneath his own house. Under the heads of the brothers he put a piece of writing, giving their names, a short history of their lives and of their martyrdom.

Count Artesius, like the emperor, Nero, and all of that generation, had passed away from the earth. The terrible persecution of the Christians came, at length, to an end. In the city of Milan, Christians were honored and magnificent churches had taken the place of heathen temples. In the year 387, the great Saint Ambrose, bishop of Milan, had built a new church, the same which is called the Ambrosian Basilica, and was on the point of dedicating it. The people of Milan, however, wished him to do this with the same solemnity with which he had already consecrated another church in the city, containing relics of the apostles. But the bishop was at a loss to obtain the necessary relics. Saint Ambrose was in the habit of spending many hours in prayer before the rails which enclosed the relics of Saint Nabor and Saint Felix. One night, as he continued long in prayer, he saw two young men, of great beauty, tall stature and covered with white garments, come and kneel beside him with hands extended in prayer. Saint Ambrose feared it was a delusion; but the young men kept their vigil with him, until the crowing of the cock. For three nights did this come to pass. On the

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third night the Apostle Paul came with them, and said to Saint Ambrose: "Behold these youths, who, despising the world and all its allurements, did not hesitate to obey my precepts. You will find their bodies on the very spot where you now kneel; and under their heads you will find their history in writing."

The morning had no sooner dawned, than Saint Ambrose hastened to call together the neighboring bishops and his own clergy. When they had assembled, Saint Ambrose, with his own hand, began the work of digging below the spot where he had kneeled, and everything was found exactly as the apostle had told him. The bodies of two beautiful young men, of tall stature, were found lying side by side. The head of one was found severed from the body, but the writing gave the history of both. Although more than three hundred years had gone by since Philip, the Christian, deposited their precious relics in their stone coffin, they were found in perfect preservation, and gave forth a most delicious perfume.

The pious Christians of Milan were no longer in need of relics for their church. In the Twentieth Book of the *City of God*, Saint Augustine tells us that in his presence, and in that of Saint Ambrose and of the emperor, as well as of a very great multitude, a blind man recovered his sight at the tomb. Saint Ambrose, also, wrote about all this to his sister, Saint Marcellina, giving her an account of the finding of their precious relics, of the pomp with which they were carried to the basilica, of the miracles wrought at the tomb as well as on their way to the basilica and after they were deposited in it. The joy of the Milanese knew no bounds. Saint Ambrose consecrated the church under the names of Saints Gervasius and Protasius, and at his death, he was laid beside the twin brothers and twin martyrs. From this time the church took the name of Saint Ambrose, and is regarded as one of the most remarkable churches in Christendom.

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In the Litany of the Saints, we still invoke the prayers of these holy youths, saying:

"*Sancti Gervasi, et Protasi, Orate pro nobis.*

The sweet odor of their sanctity still goes up before God; still blesses the air of this fallen world; still invigorates the souls of Christian youth to emulate their lives of prayer, of self-denial and of good works, and encourages them to suffer the loss of all things rather than to burn one grain of incense on the altars of a false religion. Their feast is celebrated on the 19th day of June.

There is a venerable church at Ravenna dedicated to Saint Vitalis, noted for its beautiful mosaics, which date to the year 545. In the ancient choral books at Milan, Saint Ambrose is painted standing between Saints Gervasius and Protasius, and a very old picture representing him thus, is seen under glass beside the door of his basilica. The visitor who knows how to prize such pictures, can easily secure a photograph of this on the spot.



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SAINT PHOCAS.

WITH July, and the powerful rays of its sun, what a glory, what a splendor seems to crown the world? The magnificence of morning and evening skies; the dreamy stillness of noonday; the brightness of the round moon at midnight as it stands high in the zenith and casts the deep shadows of trees, in full foliage, on the sward below; the refreshing dews which linger long after the sun has risen above the wooded mountains; the joyous carol of birds in every grove and thicket; the fields of maize, of wheat and barley moving, like the sea, under light, balmy winds, and the song of the mower and the reaper as they go to their labor ere the dew has dried from the fields; all these leave pictures on the mind and heart of youth which live in their first freshness and beauty even to old age. Who has not followed the scythe of the mower, picking up from the green swath of fresh grass, stalks of scarlet nodding lilies; or, it may be, rescuing some unfledged nestling of the meadow lark? On the hedges, dividing one farm from another, hung the white, starry clusters of the virgin's bower, and the pink, five petaled wild rose, so simple in its elegance and so delicate in its perfume, that we would not have exchanged it for all the roses that blossomed in ancient Syria or in modern Malmaison; while the

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laurel, that glory of the New England woods, still kept its large knobs of exquisitely fashioned blossoms among its glossy evergreen leaves. Then, two, the strawberry patches on the sunny slope of some hill, retired, rocky even, and almost always among the pasture lands, where some mossy stone lifted itself above the turf which had been kept closely trimmed for many a year; not by the gardener's shears, but the nibbling of the sheep as they had strolled, week after week, over the green pastures and beside the clear waters, resting under some tall maple or beech tree, when the noontide heats came on. There were raspberries, too, among the hedges which lined the way to the nearer pasture for the cows; and the long stalk of the July grass, often made a cord, upon which the school-boy strung his "thimble-berries" on his way from pasture. July is not only the month of the first wheat harvest, of the most delicate fruits and most gorgeous flowers, but it is the month in which very many souls have ripened for heaven; and among these, we especially remember Phocas, the gardener of Pontus, in Asia Minor.

Although none of us would exchange the wild, single rose of our summer hedges for any rose of Syria, yet we know that the Syrian gardens and their roses are very beautiful; and when a Syrian priest, holding in his hand some of our winter hot-house roses, told us of those which grew among the thickets of his own sunny land, told us of the bunches of grapes, almost like those of Eschol, which the children of Israel saw and longed for, we did not wonder that our own country, seen only in large towns or along the dreary wastes crossed by railroad tracks, should have seemed barren to him. In America, art has done little more for the landscape than to banish its native loveliness, Another age will be needed to make her cities blossom into beauty. But under the sky of Asia, men move more slowly, and nature keeps pace with art; and beautifies even the outskirts of her towns. And so it was, that near the gate of Sinope, a city

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of Pontus, lived Phocas, a gardener, and the earth seemed to blossom under his touch. Remembering the happy life of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, he tried to lead a life as innocent as theirs should have been, among his blossoming flowers; not by practicing merely the natural virtues of honesty, sobriety and chastity, but adding to these the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, charity and a tender contrition for his past imperfections. In his blooming garden, he really lived the life of the Fathers of the Desert, which was a life of self-denial, of fasting and of prayer. As he sowed his seeds in early spring, he remembered the parable of our Lord, about "the sower who went forth to sow," and he took good care not only to sow his flower seeds carefully, but to prepare the ground for them; and, while doing so, to keep his mind prepared to receive every word spoken to it in the hours of holy meditation. As he pruned his apricots and vines, he remembered how many times the affections of his heart, turning continually to mortal things, needed to be pruned by the sharp edge of a mortified intention; and as he gathered the fruit, produced after so much pains-taking and saw how many a cluster of grapes, how many a fair-looking apricot, was imperfect, he remembered, with tears, how little he would be able to show to our Lord by way of good works, when called to give an account of his stewardship.

It was thus that the good gardener, Phocas, grew in grace among his fruit trees and his flower-beds; and when the rich and fashionable people of Sinope came out to see his garden, to walk among the shady avenues, or to purchase baskets of fresh fruit or fragrant bouquets, they always left the garden and its modest, quiet gardener, with a feeling that there was a happiness, even, in this world, which no money of theirs could ever buy. And Phocas—can we not believe that many a prayer for the light-minded, unbelieving generation which came to him for his innocent fruits and flowers, was breathed over the baskets of luscious apricots

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and plums, and mingled its perfume with the sweetness of the roses?

So far as man could see, this humble Christian was likely to live on for many a year as peacefully as he had lived for many a year past; and to die as naturally from old age as the stalks of his favorite lilies, which grew, bore blossoms, ripened new capsules full of healthy seeds, and then quietly, without any complaint, died down to the ground. So it seemed to the haughty pagans who came to him to buy decorations for their grand banquets; so, too, perhaps, to the Christians, who came, before great festivals, to purchase votive garlands and sweet bunches of snowy blooms for the altars of the crucified Nazarene; and when, to the store which their own devotion prompted them to pay for, he added the choicest lily and rose, or the most perfect passion-flower in all the bounds of his garden, they said, turning towards the gate arched with many a brilliant vine: "How peaceful is the lot of this good man; how easy, indeed, to be good here? No temptations, no trials; with enough of this world's wealth to relieve the poor and the suffering, able to lay his offering before the altar without one thorn of uncharitableness rankling in his heart; how happy is the good gardener among his trees and flower-beds!"

Happy, Phocas certainly was; but, oh, how happier far than they dreamed who envied his peaceful lot; happier, too, in his death, than he would have dared, in his great humility, to have dreamed of for himself! For what, in his quiet life, could deserve any extraordinary graces?

It is hard to say what sort of life is most likely to obtain the grace which really was meted out to our Phocas; for it has been given to Christians in every rank and condition and occupation. It is a grace so wonderful, so heroic, that many an ardent confessor has longed for it, has even gone in search of it, like Saint Francis of Assisi, among heathen people, and still has been de-

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nied. But Phocas, who had never aspired to it, who lived within the narrow limits of his garden, saw this grace coming to him; seeking him out; and crowning him with a glory which eclipses all the badges of honor which ambitious men crave.

It was in the year 303 after Christ—one year before the holy deacon, Saint Vincent of Spain, endured his terrific martyrdom; one year, too, before Saint Agnes, the child-martyr of Rome, bent her head for the stroke of the executioner, but during the same persecution under the emperor Diocletian,—that the pagan bloodhounds, ever on the scent for Christian blood, took advantage of the cruel edict just sent out from Rome, to vent all their hatred upon these pretended enemies of the mighty empire.

The haughty idolators who had found it convenient to supply their banquets with fruits and flowers from the garden just outside the gate of Sinope, had noticed something in the manners of this gardener unlike others of his class; courteous and even graceful in his attention to their exacting taste, he never sought their patronage, and never seemed to desire undue compensation. So scrupulously honest, so modest, so free from ill-temper even under provocations; there was something very suspicious about all this. "It is not natural," they said, "for a man to love money so little, to be so ready to serve; to be so meek under provocation, yet so faultless in self-respect. It is unnatural; and the fellow must be a Christian!"

Many a one had thought this, as he rode away from the garden of Phocas towards his grand mansion in the city; had thought it, too, with a secret sting of self-reproach; but what was it to him, whether this plebeian was a Christian or not? It was not worth a patrician's thought for the one moment he had given to it; or was not supposed to be, until the decree against the Christians was sent to Pontus under Diocletian; and then, even, the haughty patrician had other things to think of. But as the persecution did not depend so much upon indolent patricians who had money

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enough, or more than enough, as upon those hungry officers of the empire who filled their pockets with the confiscated goods of their victims, this lofty indifference was no protection to the humble Christian, when a shark, in the shape of a Roman officer of justice, inquired obsequiously of a patrician, if he could not point out some rich Christian, for the benefit of the emperor's treasury.

One of these patricians, who was prolonging his drive from the garden outside the gate and in whose conscience still pricked the meek example of the gardener, said, when the question was asked: "Oh, yes, now I think of it, there is Phocas, that meek-faced gardener outside the gate; he must be a Christian, for nobody else would take so composedly the insolence of his purchasers. He has now grown rich on that flower garden; his apricots and grapes are the best in all Sinope. It would be safe to swoop down upon so fair a prey. By all means secure Phocas. I believe—yes—I am quite certain he is a Christian;" and with this piece of diabolical information off his mind and his tongue, he turned scornfully from the obsequious officer whose business it was to hunt down the Christians. But the patrician had said enough. "Phocas!" said the officer to himself, "Phocas! Surely that is the name given to me; the name of one I am to secure at all hazards; whom I need not trouble myself to bring to trial, but kill him wherever I can find him and seize on his goods. Yes, yes; it is this same Phocas; and now I remember; he was described as a gardener. That proud lord did me good service; I will not waste the late hour by going to the city, but do my work perhaps before sunset." But as the Roman official and his minions passed villa after villa, there seemed nothing by which to distinguish one from another and the heats of the summer day made them weary and thirsty. They would wait, they at last concluded, with the greedy officer at their head, for the morrow. Meanwhile, a gate seemed to stand open invitingly, and stopping

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before it they asked for refreshment and lodgings. It was the gate which led to the house of Phocas the gardener, which they had reached without knowing it. Their weary, dusty faces touching the pitying heart of the kind master, they were made welcome, and their thirst, hunger and weariness relieved as soon as possible. Charmed with the hospitality of their host and becoming communicative over the pure wines which he set forth for their refreshment, they disclosed to him the object of their visit to these strange parts, which was, "To secure the Christians of the neighborhood, and especially those who had estates; and more particularly a man named Phocas, a gardener; whose fame as a Christian had gone so far and wide in Pontus, and who was known to have laid by such a fortune by his industry, that they had orders not to risk a trial, but to kill him wherever he could be found, and confiscate his entire property. But," they continued, "being strangers, we have missed his house, and we will trust to you, as a most courteous host, to show us the way to this Christian when the morning comes."

The meek servant of God, who had learned courage, not in the ranks of any Roman legion, but in the school of Christ and of his successors, replied cheerfully: "I know this Phocas well, and with the morning I can give you every means of securing him." The official congratulated himself on this happy circumstance, and went to rest after his long ride with a most satisfied mind. But what of their host, who had received this startling news from the lips of his executioners? When his guests had retired to their pleasant beds, what plan of escape did he hasten to carry out? The mind is fertile in expedients, when danger presses; besides, in self-defence, how many things are considered lawful which would otherwise be sins? But it was none of these plans, or nice balancings of right against wrong, which occupied the mind of Phocas. He had led a humble life, contented to practice virtue in the sphere allotted to him by Provi-

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dence; but now, when the call was heard to come up from those in the lowest place to the seat of honor beside his divine master, he did not flinch or draw back from the sacrifice which this honor would cost. There was no planning of an escape, no scheming to evade this great destiny which opened before him. Suddenly, yet almost unconsciously, his soul dilated to take in this wonderful call from on high and corresponded to it. Leaving his guests to the repose they had sought under his roof, he went out to his garden; to his garden, redolent with perfume, gorgeous in its summer blossoming.. The mid-summer night, with its full moon, its dew, its soft shadows, its solemn silence, its watchful stars, its tender fragrance, was all around him. How beautiful the earth was! But to Phocas, how infinitely more beautiful was Heaven! The constellations shone out from the deep, blue sky of Asia, more wonderful in their brilliancy than ever, it seemed to Phocas; but, before they would rise again over the winding avenues of his garden, he would be far, far beyond them in the vision of God. He would see, not only the sign of the cross marked with stars in the southern heavens, but he would see him who created them and called them by their names, sitting on their starry throne. He would "know, even as he was known." A strange rapture—strange to one who had practiced virtue with so much simplicity, in such meekness and humbleness of heart—seized upon Phocas. "I have entertained angels," he said to himself, "unawares." These men, these sordid, blood-thirsty minions of a pagan emperor, became glorified in his eyes; for, had they not brought to him such a message as he had never dared to think of for himself? With a joyful step he took down from his gardening tools a spade, and there, among his own trees and flowering shrubs, he dug for himself a grave; and this done, there was nothing to distract him from the contemplation of that vision towards which he was hastening. What acts of faith, of hope, of charity; what acts, too, of perfect contrition, because it was the

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contrition of love, welled up from his heart, and rose straight to the Heart of Jesus in Heaven! The short summer night, how quickly it passed, and how soon the white dawn spread over the eastern sky, how soon, too, the rosy-fingered morning touched the clouds! And then, only then, did Phocas rise from the rapture of his contemplation. There was no unsteadiness of step, no rash bewilderment of mind, as he turned towards the house, opened the door and walked through the modest apartments to the one occupied by the officers of the mighty empire. Touching his slumbering guest gently on the shoulder, he said: "Rise, my friend, Phocas is here, and you have only to apprehend him and obey your orders."

"Phocas!" replied the officer, hardly awake; then recollecting what and whom he had come for, "yes, yes, Phocas. Bring us to him, good host; richly shall you be rewarded for your fidelity to the emperor." And wide awake with the thought of his prey so nearly within his reach, he sprang to his feet with his companions. "Make no delay, mine host; lead us to this rich Christian and we will make quick work with him and his effects!"

"I need not lead you to him, my dear friends," replied Phocas, "he stands before you."

"Where, where?" said the excited official.

"Here, in your presence. I am Phocas!"

If one of the thunderbolts from the hand of that Jove whom the Roman officer pretended to worship, had struck him and his band, they could not have been more dumb with astonishment, almost terror. This unarmed man who stood before them, was more appalling than a phalanx in battle array. Not for one moment, alone, but for many, they stood confounded and speechless before the gardener of Sinope; the host who had received them, dusty and thirsty, weary and famished; and to whose hospitality they owed even their lives that morning. Let us believe, for the sake of our common humanity, that honor, as

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well as gratitude, that respect even more than compassion, made them dumb and motionless before him. But he who allowed himself to be betrayed by a disciple whose signal should be, "Hail Master" and a kiss, was pleased that Phocas should not lose his crown. Seeing their hesitation he began to speak to them.

"Do not think, my friends, that you do me an unkindness in obeying your orders. For me there can be no such happiness as to die, a Christian, for my divine master."

One might suppose such a declaration would have converted their stony hearts, have enlightened their blinded eyes, and that they would have cried out: "Oh, good Phocas! We too are Christians!" But Phocas could see, as we can now after these more than fifteen hundred years, that their respect for their host was only a natural feeling of admiration for a brave man, and gratitude to him for his hospitality. At the word Christian, instead of melting into contrition for having thus plotted against the life of an innocent man, their hatred and contempt returned; and, taking him from his house under whose roof-tree they had slept into the garden, they beheaded him with their swords and flung him into the grave which his own hands had dug.

This was on the 3d day of July, 303. As soon as peace was restored, the Christians of Sinope built a stately church to which was given the name of Saint Phocas, and in this church were placed his precious relics. Saint Asterius, bishop of Amasea in Pontus, and therefore a countryman of Saint Phocas, about the year 400, pronounced a panegyric on this martyr, in a church which possessed a small part of his remains. In this discourse, the saintly bishop says: "Phocas, from the time of his death became a pillar and support of the churches on earth, while he draws all men, to his house; the highways are filled with persons resorting from every country to this place of prayer. The magnificent church at Sinope, which is possessed of his body, is the comfort of the afflicted, the health of the sick, the magazine

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plentifully supplying the wants of the poor; and if in any other place, some small portion of his relics be found, this place also becomes admirable, and most desired by all Christians."

The sailors in the Euxine, Ægean and Adriatic seas, and of the broad ocean, sing hymns in honor of the holy martyr who has so often succored them in their distress, and that portion of their gain which is set apart, after every voyage, for the poor, is called, "Phocas's part." Saint John Chrysostom received a portion of the relics of Saint Phocas at his basilica in Constantinople, on which joyful occasion the city kept a great festival for two days; and this same Saint John, who was called, on account of his eloquence, Chrysostom or golden mouth, preached two sermons, one of which is still in existence, in honor of Saint Phocas. So "precious, in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints."



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SAINT MARGARET.

"YOUR only hope of saving the child, is to give her into the care of some good peasant-woman, not for six months or a year only, but until she has fairly outgrown this delicacy of constitution;" and the old doctor shook his head in a way to show that he was entirely satisfied with his own advice. Not so, however, with the mother, Drucilla. "How can I make up my mind to part with this beloved child, not merely for a few months, but possibly for years; to forego all the pleasures of her society at the most interesting age? Indeed, you are requiring me to make a great sacrifice!" and she looked first at her child and then at the doctor, while tears rolled slowly down her cheeks.

"Remember that it is not the doctor who requires this sacrifice from you, but the gods themselves. You have offered more than one cock to Æsculapius already. Theodosius, I am certain, has not forgotten one sacrifice which could propitiate the rulers of Olympus. Still the child continues to decline. You must choose between the loss of her society in infancy, and the loss of it altogether. Nothing but country life and country diet, can give the least chance of life to the child."

"Then," said Drucilla, "you must, yourself, tell this to Theo-

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dosius. His heart is set on the child. Her smile can bring a smile to his face under any and every discontent. I can never reconcile him to the idea of sending her from her own tender home to grow up like a peasant-child."

"I will speak to Theodosius myself, good lady," said the doctor, for he really pitied these fond parents; "but," he continued, "if Theodosius loves the child as you say, and as I know he does, he will not hesitate to preserve her life by sacrificing his pleasure in her for a few short years."

Theodosius was a priest in one of the temples of Antioch. Although for more than two hundred years there had been Christians in Antioch; although Saint Peter and Saint Paul had both preached the faith there; although the followers of Jesus Christ were called Christians *first at Antioch*, yet many of the inhabitants still offered sacrifices to dumb idols; and it was in the service of these dumb idols that Theodosius spent his life. But he was a fond and unselfish father. No sooner, then, had he heard upon what condition he could expect his little daughter to live, than he acted upon the doctor's advice. "Do not be cast down, Drucilla," he said to his wife; "I have thought, this very moment, of a good peasant-woman with whom we can trust our little Margaret—our *pearl*—our *daisy!** She lives quite beyond the suburbs among the hills, keeps a flock of sheep and brings their wool to market spun into strong yarn for the weavers. Sometimes, too, she brings in vegetables; and we have often been served from her basket at dinner. Let us drive out to her cottage this very afternoon, and take Margaret with us. If she stretches out her little hands to good Dame Syra, let us take it as a sign that she may stay with her safely."

Drucilla consented to this; and wrapping up the infant in a richly-embroidered mantle, they started for Dame Syra's cottage.

* **Margaret signifies a pearl. The name has been given, also, to the wild daisy.**

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They found it just as Theodosius had said, nested away among the hills overlooking the fair city of Antioch; but far enough away for pure air, pure water and simple manners. They found, too, Dame Syra watching her flock of sheep, distaff in hand, spinning the coarse yarn for the weavers. The hills were so green, the chestnut and ilex trees cast such cool shadows on the valleys and hill-sides, that Drucilla was charmed. Then the cottage was covered with running vines, and the beautiful roses of Asia Minor blossomed before the small windows. When they were led into the cottage by Dame Syra, they found everything as neat within as everything was inviting on the outside; but most of all, the face of Dame Syra was a mild face, full of sunshine. No sooner had they opened the mantle in which the little Margaret was wrapped, than she stretched out her small hands to Dame Syra with one of her most bewitching smiles. "See! see! Drucilla, was I not right? You cannot hesitate to leave even our *pearl*, our *daisy*, with good Dame Syra. Leave her this very afternoon. It will only prolong your sorrow at parting to take her back with us and lessen the chances for her recovery. You can never leave her with less pain than to-day." All this time the little Margaret was sitting on the motherly knee of her new friend; sitting so contentedly, that Drucilla felt almost jealous. But her motherly affection was too strong for her selfishness, and she consented to leave the child that very afternoon. There were few terms to be made with Dame Syra. The money which Theodosius, the rich priest of Antioch, thought a mere pittance, was a mine of wealth to Dame Syra. Then, too, her motherly heart went forth to the pale patrician child, who had held out her hands so confidingly to the simple peasant woman. "It will fill the place left aching by the death of my little ones," she said, and the foster-mother and foster-child seemed, at once, to understand each other.

As the old doctor had predicted, an immediate change came

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over little Margaret. They had despaired of her ever being able to walk. In a few weeks she could follow Dame Syra from one end of the small cottage to the other. She would sit, hour after hour, under the roses, pulling the buds and watching the sparrows flitting in and out of their nest under the eaves. Very soon, too, Dame Syra found her strong enough to be carried out on her back, with her plump arms around Dame Syra's neck, to the pasture on the hill-side. Once there, she was the happiest of the happy. The frisking of the lambs, the blue sky with its white clouds over her head, the flowers that grew close at her hand and above all, the white daisies, which Dame Syra told her were her own flowers, made a continual pastime for her. In a short time the lambs knew her as well as they knew Dame Syra, and would come at her call for a handful of salt, or a tuft of sweet grass. In truth, Margaret, or *pearl*, as these good peasants loved to call the fair child, was Dame Syra's shadow; following her every moment of the day. No one would have recognized, in the gay little shepherd-girl, the pale, sickly infant of two years before. Drucilla would gladly have taken her home again, but the doctor's voice prevailed. "She will lose this fine health in three months," said he, "if left again to the care of your slaves."

Thus the years went on, until Margaret was fourteen years old. At this time she was as tall and straight as a young fir-tree, as pliant and as graceful as a young willow. She was skilled in all the household arts of Dame Syra, who allowed her to share her labors. But most of all Margaret loved the open air and to follow the sheep. The clear air of the hills made her cheeks glow with health, but left them untouched by the sun. Her eye was calm and innocent, her step elastic and joyous. She never pined for her splendid home in Antioch, and the only complaint that Drucilla could make, was that "Margaret was too contented with Dame Syra." At length Drucilla had resolved to take Margaret home

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again. "It is time for us to think of marrying Margaret, according to her station," said Drucilla to Theodosius, one evening after they had driven out to Dame Syra's. "The child is growing tall and womanly, and will be very beautiful; but she is a perfect little rustic. She will never have the manners proper to her rank, unless we take her home with us and very soon."

"I do not know how we are to do this without breaking her heart," replied Theodosius; "her affection for Dame Syra, while it never interferes with her filial love and duty to ourselves, is something very remarkable. I have never seen so tender and noble an attachment between a patrician child and a peasant foster-mother; usually there is an air of servile flattery on one side, and of patronizing regard on the other. But between Margaret and Dame Syra, there is a simplicity which always charms me and quenches every spark of paternal jealousy. Much as Margaret loves Dame Syra, I am certain that she loves her no more than the honest peasant-woman deserves."

"One would think, Theodosius, from what you say," interrupted Drucilla, "that you intended to leave our Margaret with Dame Syra altogether!"

"You know me too well to speak in this way, Drucilla, but I confess I dread to take Margaret back to the wicked city. I dread to see her snatched from us by some profane youth. She has been trained in a school which I do not understand; but I admire the results of Dame Syra's teachings and example. Do not fear, Drucilla, that she will not be admired enough. The only danger is an excessive admiration; for it is plain to see the child has never been flattered. Leave her a little longer, in peace and innocence, with good Dame Syra."

Another year was thus allowed to pass over Margaret in the tranquillity of Dame Syra's cottage among the hills. One day, at the close of this year, when spring was just passing into full summer, Margaret was watching her sheep, as usual, within sight

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and call of the cottage door. She carried her distaff in her hand, like Dame Syra, sang quietly to herself because she was too happy to be altogether silent, and wore a peasant's dress as suited her occupation. While she thus spun, sang and watched her flock, a chariot passed along the unfrequented road which led past the cottage and the pasture. As soon as the driver came within sight of Margaret, he slackened the paces of his horses at the command of his master, who saw, at a glance, her extraordinary beauty. "Do not halt altogether," said the master of the chariot, who was no less a personage than Olibrius, the governor of Antioch; "but return this very day, and find out if this damsel is free-born or a slave." Margaret had been too intent upon her spinning, too engrossed with her own beautiful thoughts and the hymn she was singing, to notice the chariot; but Dame Syra had seen everything, noted everything. She knew the chariot of Olibrius, the pagan governor; she knew, too, that his covetous eyes had discovered the beauty of Margaret, in spite of her peasant garb. She knew, too, that he would never rest until he had possession of her *pearl*, her *daisy*. With a cry of anguish, she knelt on the hard tiles of her cottage-floor; nor did she rise until she saw the chariot drive slowly on. A moment after, she had given her gentle call to Margaret to return to the house, saying to herself: "My darling is not safe even here. The ravening wolf is already upon her track. She must no longer watch the sheep. I will find some excuse to keep her within doors."

No messenger came to inquire for Margaret, and Dame Syra's fears were beginning to sleep; but the next day, Theodosius drove rapidly to the very threshold of the cottage and alighted with a look of terrible anxiety on his face. He saluted Margaret as usual, but drew the foster-mother one side. "How is it," he hurriedly asked, "how is it that Olibrius, the governor, has caught sight of Margaret? I supposed her safe under your watchful eyes, Dame Syra," he added reproachfully. Dame Syra immediately told how

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the chariot of Olibrius had passed along this unfrequented road, and the fears excited in her own mind when she saw that the governor had noticed Margaret, even in her rustic habit. She also told him that she had not allowed Margaret to follow the sheep from that moment.

"Then he has had no opportunity to speak to Margaret?"

"No," replied Dame Syra.

"But has no messenger been sent here to inquire concerning her?"

"No one, I assure you."

"How strange!" said Theodosius. Then recovering himself, he said, "My good Syra, no blame can be laid at your door. It is simply a misfortune. In some way, Olibrius has discovered that Margaret is not a peasant-girl but the daughter of the richest priest in Antioch. He has therefore demanded her in marriage."

Seeing Dame Syra turn deadly pale, he said: "Everybody will call this a grand alliance. Even Drucilla ought to be satisfied with it; but we are both heart-broken over this strange proposal. Still it cannot be declined, or even put off. We will say nothing of the affair to Margaret here; but I must take her with me to Antioch this very hour." Theodosius had not courage to see the parting between Dame Syra and her foster-child. On Dame Syra's part, who understood the terrible trial before her unconscious darling, it was too agonizing to be put into words. As she embraced Margaret again and again, she whispered in her ear: "Remember *whom* you serve!" And Margaret, as she returned each embrace, whispered in the ear of the good Syra, "I will remember!"

Great was the rejoicing in the house of Theodosius when its young and beautiful mistress was known to have returned to her parents. But under all these rejoicings, the hearts of Theodosius and of Drucilla felt a strange foreboding. There was something in the peaceful face of their daughter, in the midst of these

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festivities, which they could not understand. Drucilla's fears that she would appear like a peasant under her patrician robes, disappeared in a moment. A tranquil self-possession and a most tender modesty, marked every movement; and the beauty of her countenance was equaled by the grace of her manners. But these surprises were hardly over, when the importunate suit of the governor was renewed. A message hinted to them that he would brook no delay. When they gave this message to their daughter, they expected, almost dreaded, to see in her some sign of gratified vanity; but she exclaimed: "Is it for this you took me from the arms of my faithful foster-mother? took me from her to give me to Olibrius, the wicked governor of Antioch? I supposed that I had left my foster-parents only to cheer my own father and mother in their declining years!" At these words, both Theodosius and Drucilla embraced her, weeping and exclaiming in their turn: "O daughter, believe us! you cannot be so afflicted at this proposal from the governor as ourselves; but we dare not refuse his demand. It would cost us the loss of his friendship; and in the end, certain death, on one pretence or another.

"Then, since *you* cannot refuse his demand, I will refuse it myself. I can never marry Olibrius."

"You are simply beside yourself, child!" said Theodosius. "Who ever heard of refusing the hand of a governor of Antioch?"

"My father," said Margaret, calmly, "send the messenger to me. I will give an answer to Olibrius that will put every thought of marrying me out of his heart. Do not fear," Margaret continued, "no harm will come to any of us. You will be clear of blame, and he will not wish to marry me." There was no time to argue the point with Margaret, and her sunshiny look gave them confidence in her assurance that no harm would follow. The messenger was called in, and Margaret said: "Tell your

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master, Olibrius, that Margaret, the Christian, cannot marry a worshiper of idols, even though he is governor of Antioch." At the word Christian, Theodosius sprang towards Margaret with a cry of fury. His eyes glared like the eyes of a wild beast. Clutching her fiercely by the shoulder, and grinding his teeth with rage, he said in a low voice: "Is this your answer to the governor of Antioch, foolish one? Is this the lesson you have learned in that peasant-hut?" while, at the same moment, Drucilla shrieked and fell into the arms of her attendants. In the midst of all this confusion, the messenger stood as if doubtful what word to take to his master. Theodosius suddenly recollected himself and said: "Tell the governor, Olibrius, that I denounce my own daughter before the imperial tribunal as a Christian!" then turning to Margaret, he said: "I could not screen you if I would; I would not if I could!" and left the room. It is useless to offer any explanation of such conduct on the part of a parent. It is sufficient to know that a change in the affection of a father or mother as sudden as that in Theodosius, was not uncommon in the days when Christians were persecuted. Our Lord himself predicted it, and thus prepared his followers for one of the severest trials of their constancy, when he said: "for a man's foes shall be they of his own household." The next messenger from the governor was accompanied by an armed guard, who had been commanded to bring Margaret before him as a prisoner. If Margaret was beautiful among the rustic scenes of her peasant-life, how much more so now, when her girlish innocence had become majestic by her one act of declaring herself a Christian! Olibrius might well have been awed; but he kept back any word of surprise, and asked her, coldly, her name, her country and her religion. To which she replied: "My name is Margaret, born of a noble race in the city of Antioch and by religion I am a Christian."

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"But how does it happen, that, being of noble birth, you are a Christian?"

"By the grace of God, I was given in my childhood to a Christian peasant-woman to be nursed. From her I learned the doctrines of Christ. When I came to the age of reason, I was baptized."

"And you, a patrician, have taken all this, on trust, from the mouth of a poor peasant-woman! How can a young girl, noble and beautiful, debase her mind so much as to adore Jesus, the crucified one?"

But Margaret replied: "Where did you learn that Jesus was crucified?"

"In the Christian books," answered Olibrius.

"Then," said Margaret, "if you read concerning his humiliation, you read also concerning his power and his triumph. Why should you believe one part of this wonderful history and deny the other part? If Jesus was crucified, according to the Christian books, he also rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he ever sits at the right hand of God, in all the glory of the Father." This answer so irritated the governor, that he harshly ordered her to be taken to the prison. The next day, however, he resolved to use his best persuasions to overcome her "foolish obstinacy," as he called her faith. He resolved to be patient, and to win her if possible; for her great beauty made him wish to save her life. When she was brought before him, therefore, he addressed her with great gentleness: "Unhappy child!" he began, "you were taken so early from your tender mother, that you cannot be held accountable for your ignorance. Your foster-mother knew no better than to put this nonsense into your head. The religion which began with a few poor fishermen in Gallilee, is the religion for the poor; for Dame Syra, if she fancies it. For one like yourself, it is idle to waste time or thought over it. Your father is an honored priest of the gods. Why should you not worship

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the gods of your country with him? Take pity on your own youth, upon your beauty, upon your parents, upon Dame Syra herself, who will grieve over your early death. Adore the gods of your family, of your city, of your nation and be happy!"

"I adore him, and him only," calmly replied Margaret, "before whom all creatures on the earth, and in the depths of the sea, tremble as before their sovereign Lord and their Creator." At this answer the governor forgot all his resolutions to *win* Margaret, and called out to her in an angry voice: "If you persist in your willful blindness, I will order the flesh to be torn from your sides till the ribs are laid bare!" Margaret's only reply to this threat was: "Jesus delivered himself unto death for my sake. For myself, I have but one desire, which is to die for him." As she said this she closed her eyes, bowed her head, and gently folded her hands on her bosom. The governor was beside himself. "Let her swing by her arms from that gallows," he called out, "and scourge her with rods!" They had scarcely begun to obey this order, bringing blood with every stroke of the rods, when a still more cruel torture came to his mind, and he shouted: "Not the rods; but tear her sides with red-hot irons till her ribs lie bare, as I promised her!" This terrible torture made even the executioners weep as they obeyed the command of the tyrant. They even entreated her to take compassion upon herself. But Margaret exclaimed: "O false friends! O evil counsellors! Do you not understand that these torments in my flesh will secure the salvation of my soul?" Then turning to the governor, she said: "You, indeed, have power to afflict my body, but Jesus alone has power to afflict my soul." As she said this, the blood gushed in such streams from her tender sides that the governor sickened at the sight of it, and covered his face with his mantle. "Cut the cords!" he said, hoarsely, "and take her back to her prison."

No sooner did Margaret find herself in the cold dungeon into

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which she had been thrust by the guards, than a wonderful light shone all about her. In an ecstacy of joy she prayed to her Lord, thanking him for her great deliverance; but as she said this, an awful apparition glared upon her from a corner of her dungeon. We are told that Satan appeared to Eve in the garden of Eden in the form of a serpent. He appeared to Margaret in the form of a dragon; more horrible than a serpent, more loathsome than a crocodile, and yet with some resemblance to a man. But this could not deceive Margaret. Her soul was prepared for temptations; and when a smooth voice came from this loathsome creature, saying: "Be content, Margaret; you have already suffered enough to win your salvation!" she cried out: "Tremble, thou enemy of God and man! writhe under the foot of woman!" and placed her young foot on the neck of the monstrous apparition. For one instant the creature groveled at her feet. Then she said: "Begone, wretched one!" and the dreadful shape disappeared as noiselessly as it came. The bright light again shone on and on, and the soul of Margaret was lifted above all sense of pain, all remembrance of her torments. When the guards came to her in the morning, they saw before them a being of celestial beauty and of celestial joy. Her feet which had stepped upon Satan, and remained unharmed, seemed scarcely to touch the earth on her way to the judgment-hall. Again she was led before her inexorable tormentor. The vast hall was filled with a pagan crowd of five thousand persons, who had heard that the daughter of Theodosius, the richest priest in all Antioch, was to be tried as a Christian. Olibrius was determined to vanquish her resolution before this crowd. He ordered her to "sacrifice to the gods." When she refused, he told the executioners to hold lighted torches to her already mangled sides. Then, frantic at the sight of her constancy, he ordered her to be plunged into a great bath, full of water, so that the change might sharpen her torments. At this moment the very earth trembled, and Margaret

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came forth from the bath like one perfectly unharmed. Then it was, that one deep voice came from the five thousand in the judgment-hall, as if all had been inspired to speak the same words: "O, blessed Margaret, we, too, are Christians!" Defeated, put to shame by a mere girl, the wretched Olibrius knew but one way to avenge himself. The executioner was ordered to strike off her head at a blow, and the soul of Margaret stood in its unsullied beauty before the face of God.

If Theodosius, after denouncing his own child, had not hidden himself from the light of day in his desolated home, he would have seen Dame Syra, like a shadow, flitting to and fro wherever Margaret appeared. He would have seen, too, the look and the whispered word, as they met for one instant on Margaret's way to and from her prison. He would have seen how the love of the Christian foster-mother followed its charge to the last moment of anguish, to the first of celestial triumph. Unhappy Theodosius, unhappy Drucilla! May we not believe that they were mysteriously added to the five thousand converted by the constancy, in suffering for Christ, of Margaret, virgin and martyr, on the 20th of July, 306?

A special devotion to Saint Margaret was brought from the East by the first Crusaders, on their return to Europe in the eleventh century. From that time, the name of *Margaret* became a favorite one. Queens, who also became saints, received this name in baptism; and the people were not slow in following this example. Among all the pictures that have been painted in honor of Saint Margaret, the most beautiful is the one painted by Raphael, for Francis I., as a compliment to his sister, Margaret of Navarre. It represents the saint at the very moment of victory; one foot on the wing of the dragon, writhing under her touch, while his horrid mouth is still open as if to devour her. The right hand bears the palm of the martyr, the left touches her

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robe; and in the beautiful face and slender figure, there is all the simplicity of her tender years.

Thus, while queens and the noble dames of grand courts wear their *pearls* in honor of Margaret; the peasant-girl, as she follows her flocks over the hills, or leads them at night to their safe fold, or carries her milk-pail on her head at twilight, gathers the white *daisy* with its golden eye, in honor of this same gentle patroness of both rich and poor; and both say, with the same fervor—

"Holy Saint Margaret, pray for us!"



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fortune. As to Joachim himself, he was like one struck down in his full strength by an envious hand. A terrible sense of injury, of injustice, rose up in his heart; then, seeing the scorn on the faces of his neighbors and companions, his shame became unbearable. With his double offering in his hand, he turned from the temple without once looking back, hastened to his own house, but entered it in such a way as not to be seen by his wife Anne, or even by his servants. Shutting himself up, he took down the rolls on which were written the records of his family, back to dah and even to Jacob. "Can it be," he said, "that I am the y childless one of my tribe?" But when he had looked these rds through, he found that of all the good men of his tribe had lived before him, each had borne one child to the Lord. ham, indeed, had borne one son only, and he was a child mise; but thenceforth, Isaac, with his two sons, Jacob with Judah. It was a hence onward, gave no parallel to his own childtude of Joachim and own to the earth by this humiliation, he left God had visited them. by Anne, and betook himself to the wild When only twenty years of erds kept his flocks; leaving no word both belonging to the tribe of temple had not gone unnoticed lives, full of charity and goodness ers of the law. Like Abraham, Isaac an failed to be commented his flocks and herds. His income had ble offering had been reinto three parts: one part was given to widows, d wide, came poor and to travelers; the second was given to the iety when the third was used for his own household. This division of s all income had been so pleasing to God, that the increase of his flocks was a subject of astonishment to his neighbors, and many a one envied the rich, though charitable Joachim his prosperity. But in one respect this good husband and wife had not been blessed, for while fields and flocks flourished under the care of Joachim, no children came to gladden his house, to give a prom-

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whole was said and done with all possible quietness, but could not be concealed from those around him. Many of these, having envied him his riches, now rejoiced in seeing him humbled in the sight of his people. They were not so rich as Joachim and they had brought no double offering; but such as it was, it had been accepted; and they did not hide their satisfaction under a kind countenance. Their faces expressed their envious dislike of his prosperity, and their joy at his chagrin and mis-

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fortune. As to Joachim himself, he was like one struck down in his full strength by an envious hand. A terrible sense of injury, of injustice, rose up in his heart; then, seeing the scorn on the faces of his neighbors and companions, his shame became unbearable. With his double offering in his hand, he turned from the temple without once looking back, hastened to his own house, but entered it in such a way as not to be seen by his wife Anne, or even by his servants. Shutting himself up, he took down the rolls on which were written the records of his family, back to Judah and even to Jacob. "Can it be," he said, "that I am the only childless one of my tribe?" But when he had looked these records through, he found that of all the good men of his tribe who had lived before him, each had borne one child to the Lord. Abraham, indeed, had borne one son only, and he was a child of promise; but thenceforth, Isaac, with his two sons, Jacob with his twelve, and thence onward, gave no parallel to his own childless state. Bowed down to the earth by this humiliation, he left his house again, unseen by Anne, and betook himself to the wild pastures where his shepherds kept his flocks; leaving no word for his wife or his household.

Meanwhile, as the scene in the temple had not gone unnoticed by those who were near, so it had not failed to be commented upon; and the news that Joachim's double offering had been rejected by the priest of the temple, spread, far and wide, came even to the ears of Anne. Great had been her anxiety when Joachim did not return at the expected time; but now it was all explained. Besides, the shepherds whispered the strange conduct of Joachim on coming to them; his dejection, and the look of utter self-abasement on the face of their master; so unlike himself; and this news, though only whispered, came also to the ears of Anne. It was all plain to her now. What had been a grief to them had now become an open shame; a shame so great that Joachim could not bear it; and while deprived of children,

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she was bereaved of her husband. She heard that Joachim had built a hut for himself among the shepherds and the sheep-cotes; that he was fasting, declaring: "Until the Lord look mercifully upon me, prayer shall be my meat and drink;" and she said: "What can I do better than to follow the example of Joachim, my husband?" So she laid aside her sweet-smelling linen and her embroidered garments and dressed herself as a widow, giving herself up to prayer and to fasting, "for it may be," she said, "that my prayers will be heard, even like the prayers of Hannah, the mother of Samuel." On a certain day, as she wept and prayed in the innermost room of her house, she fell still again on her knees and poured forth still more earnest prayers, and shed still more abundant tears; when she suddenly resolved to put aside her grief. Rising, she laid off her coarse garments and took out the robe and the ornaments which she had worn as a bride. Towards the ninth hour, or the middle of our afternoon, she walked out for the first time since her great sorrow, into her garden. But although she was dressed in festal garments, and although the garden was in all its beauty and bloom, the heart of Anne was still heavy, and sitting down under a laurel-tree she thus sighed forth her prayer: "God of my fathers, hear me, and bless me as thou didst bless Sarah, to whom thou gavest a son." Then raising her eyes she saw a sparrow's nest and the sparrow was teaching her young ones to fly. At this sight, Anne's tears flowed afresh, and she said in the bitterness of her soul: "Ah me, to whom shall I compare myself? Why have I been born to be an object of scorn to my people? My husband rejected, pushed from the temple! To what can I compare myself? Not to the birds of heaven, for their little ones are hatched and fledged in thy sight and sing thy praises, O, my God. To what shall I compare myself! Not to the fishes of the sea, for their offspring make known thy wonderful works. To what indeed

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can I compare myself? Not to the plains, for they bear fruit in due season and praise thee, O Lord!"

And as she moaned in her anguish an angel of the Lord stood beside her under the laurel-tree, and said: "Anne, thy prayer is heard; a child shall be born to thee, and this child shall be called blessed throughout the world. And not thy prayer, only, is heard; but the prayer of Joachim, thy husband. He comes to thee, comes now, by the way of the golden gate, having learned from my lips the gracious designs of God towards him and thyself." With these words, which turned all her sorrowing into joy, Anne called her maidens, and set forth, closely veiled, for the golden gate; and as she entered it on the city side, Joachim entered from the side of the country. There was no need of words. They had but to look into each other's eyes to read there the joyful news given to them by the angel. With what inexpressible tenderness did not Joachim lay his hand under Anne's arm. for he saw her ready to faint with joy; and Anne! Laying hold of her husband's mantle, she said in a voice which Joachim alone could hear: "Now I know that the Lord hath blessed me; I who was a widow and childless, shall become a joyful mother."

That was a glad 8th of September when it was told to Joachim that a little daughter had come to bless his home. All other prosperities grew insignificant before this one, which had come in answer to such prayers, such penances. He had not asked God to give him a son; and now he was not disappointed to find that God had given him a daughter. But he had said: "Whether it be a son or a daughter, it shall be given to the Lord to serve him in his holy temple." As to Anne, the peace which filled her heart surpassed all the joys of mothers. A certain serenity had, from the very first, filled her soul, her entire being. What is to other mothers a cause of anxiety, of pain, brought only repose of mind, happiness of body. Not one tear had this

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sweet infant caused her, not one pang; and as Anne saw her in the arms of the old nurse who had attended herself from her birth, and saw with what reverential delight she wrapped her in her swaddling clothes and caressed the beautiful cheeks and infant lips, a wonderful thought took possession of her: "Could this child, like others, be under the shadow of Eve's sin? Could it be that this child, like others, had been born without the beautiful crown of original justice which Eve wore before her fall?" She could not have put into words the conviction of her soul, but she said in her own heart, "If any child has come into the world fit to be the mother of the Messiah it is my own little Miriam, my Mary." With a loving jealousy of every one who approached this child of benediction, Anne considered it her privilege to perform each motherly office for her. She would nurse her own child, she said; and as she did so prayed God to purify her milk that it might not defile her innocent babe. As the child grew, she was instructed in prayer; but Anne said: "She prays without being taught;" while Joachim said to Anne more than once: "Our child is a child of blessing, and not only to us but to all Israel. Not solely for our unworthy sakes, my Anne, was this child given to us. The fulfillment of the prophecies is near at hand, we are assured by all who are most venerated among us for their wisdom. Who can tell what honors are in waiting for our beloved one?"

Meanwhile the time came for Joachim and Anne to fulfill their promise. The little Miriam, or Mary, was now three years old, and desolate as their home would be, they would not delay. From the moment of her birth, nothing which could sully the purity of her mind or manners had been allowed to come near her. The rooms in which she dwelt, the bed on which she lay, were places for angels to dwell in, to rest upon. There was no luxury; and the maidens who attended upon her were true daughters of Israel, "pure and gentle." And now Joachim said

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to Anne: "Our child is three years old; let us invite the daughters of Israel, and each one shall take a taper and go with her to the temple of the Lord." And when they came to the temple, they placed her on the first step, and she ascended joyfully and alone, all the fifteen steps to the altar. There the high priest received her and kissed her and blessed her, saying: "Mary, the Lord has magnified thy name to all generations, and in thee shall be made known the redemption of the children of Israel." And being placed before the altar, the little one danced with her feet, so that all the house of Israel rejoiced with her and loved her. Then her parents returned home, blessing God because the maiden had entered the temple so joyfully and had not wished to turn back.

Every year this pious couple wended their way from Nazareth to Jerusalem to pay their homage to God, to make their offerings, no longer refused, and to visit their beloved daughter, now growing up a picture of innocence, of heavenly mindedness, of wisdom and of beauty. The holy scriptures were her delight; and its prophecies she knew by heart. Skilled in all the accomplishments of the Hebrew women, her embroideries were all for the temple. The only time that she left its sacred enclosure was when her father, the aged Joachim, fell ill and drawing near to death, called for his daughter. As she approached him and he stretched forth his hands to bless her, his eyes were opened to discover fully her immaculate innocence, and the glorious destiny to which she had been called. The heart of Joachim was satisfied. A celestial joy overspread his face. He lowered his arms, inclined his head gently on his aged breast and expired.

And Anne? No one but God and herself knew the holy love which had united her to Joachim or all that Joachim had been to Anne. The radiant child born to them, she felt, belonged less to them than to heaven, to Israel and the prophecies. She could not lay a finger on the hem of that child's garment, in a way to

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call her, "her own." Therefore, when Joachim died, Anne could only survive him long enough to pay him the last honors due to a true son of David; and then, blessing her daughter, "she slept," as we are told, "the sleep of the just." The first pale dawn which preceded the Annunciation, may be said to have shone over Joachim and Anne, because a divine revelation had been vouchsafed to them at death; but no Joseph had yet claimed Mary as a virgin spouse, and no Gabriel had brought her the message to which she replied: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word;" and with the freshness of her fourteenth summer upon her, Mary returned to the temple to fulfill her own vocation and to pray for the souls of her departed parents.

The feast of Saint Anne is kept on the 26th day of July, and almost always under a sky as blue as that which overarched the golden gate the day she welcomed Saint Joachim, her spouse. In modern times, or at least among ourselves, Saint Anne seems to have been almost left out from the catalogue of saints familiarly invoked. But in those countries where Catholic devotion has borne its most beautiful flowers, there is not a church of any consideration without its chapel dedicated to Saint Anne. At Rome, the veneration to Saint Anne is everywhere apparent, but perhaps there are no lovelier tributes paid to her than in the church of San Onofrio, San Isidore and San Pietro in Montorio. The pictures of Saint Anne in all of these, are such as live in the memory and have been acknowledged as master-pieces of art; while in those cities of Italy celebrated for their cathedrals, such as Orvieto, Siena, Florence, Padua, no series of pictures representing the life of the Blessed Virgin is without its tribute to her mother, Saint Anne. This series of pictures, known as the "Life of the Blessed Virgin," generally occupies the spaces on the wall known as the *apse* of the sanctuary. But at Orvieto, not only on the walls of the apse, but, set in unfading mosaic, on the gold

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ground of the magnificent facade, is the story of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, their meeting at the golden gate, and the birth of their child whom 'all generations were to call blessed!' Giotto painted both these scenes on the low wall of the Green Cloister of Santa Maria Novella, his parish church in Florence; and still again, in the very zenith of his fame, in the chapel of Our Lady of the Arena at Padua. One of Leonardo da Vinci's most celebrated designs, drawn, but never painted, for the Servites of the Annunziata in Florence, was a Saint Anne, with her Blessed Daughter and her Divine Infant. Drawn simply in black and white, without a single charm of color, this design attracted all Florence to the convent of the Servite Fathers, and is still regarded as one of the triumphs of his genius; one of the loveliest proofs of his devotion, not only to Mary and her Son, but to the dear mother of Mary, Saint Anne.



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SAINT FILUMENA.

"HER name must be Lumena," said the happy mother, "for did not our child come to us with the light of faith?" "This is true," said the prince, her father. "Publius has been more than a courtier; he has been to us a friend and brother. Through him we have learned the doctrines of the true faith, and received strength to practice them. Now, as he promised, our little daughter comes as a reward of this faith, which gives us so much happiness every day." And with such gentle words was Lumena, the first and only child of her royal parents, welcomed into life.

When the time came for her to be baptized, they said: "Is not our daughter the *child of light?* Therefore we must call her, not only Lumena, but Filumena,"* and by this name she was baptized. The little Filumena lived in perfect peace with her good Christian parents and the learned Publius was her teacher, in her beautiful home beneath the blue sky of Greece, until she was thirteen years of age. At this time, public affairs, as also the command of Dioclesian, the emperor, called the prince, her

*From *Filia luminis*, daughter of light.

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father, to Rome. Very seldom indeed had he been absent from his small kingdom, and now he could not think of leaving his wife and his young daughter behind him. "You, also, shall go to Rome," he said, "and see the great city, the mistress of the world. Together we will visit the tombs of the apostles, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and seek the blessing of the successor of Saint Peter, Marcellinus, the holy bishop of Rome."

When he was allowed an interview with the emperor, the princess, his wife, and Filumena were with him. As the prince went on with his story, he noticed that the emperor paid very little attention to what he was saying, but looked continually at his daughter. The prince did not much wonder at this, for Filumena was very beautiful. At length the emperor interrupted him, saying, "Give yourself no farther anxiety about this matter; all the force of my empire shall be at your disposal, and in return I will ask of you but one thing—the hand of your daughter."

The prince could scarcely believe his own ears. What! the daughter of a petty prince in one corner of Greece, chosen to be the empress of Rome! All this did not make him forget that it would cost him much to give up his daughter, nor that Diocle-sian was a pagan and a persecutor of Christians. But what could he do? Who would dare to refuse a Roman emperor any request which he might make? Therefore, without appearing to hesitate for a moment, he agreed to give his daughter to Diocle-sian. No sooner was Filumena alone with her parents than she said, "O my father! how could you promise me to the emperor, when I have vowed to consecrate myself to the service of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?"

"You were too young, my child, to make that vow."

"But having made it, how can I break it?"

For the first time in her life Filumena's father looked at her

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in anger, saying: "Do not dare to disobey me!" For he knew the fearful consequences of thwarting the emperor's will.

When the order arrived for Filumena to brought into the presence of the emperor, she again reminded her parents that she was unable to fulfill the promise given by her father. It was in vain that they told her of the death that surely awaited her if she refused—of the destruction of her whole family. Their words fell upon deaf ears; and even when both these beloved parents knelt before her, saying, with tears in their eyes: "Take pity, Filumena, on your father, your mother, your country, your subjects," she exclaimed, "Have you not yourselves taught me these words of our Divine Lord, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me?'" She was carried to the palace and brought before the emperor, but it was only to refuse all the honors which he offered to her. Repelled thus, his anger knew no bounds, and calling his guards, "Shut up this child," he exclaimed, "in a gloomy prison, load her with chains, and give her nothing but bread and water." This horrible captivity had lasted thirty-seven days, when, in the midst of a heavenly light, Filumena saw the Virgin Mother before her, holding her Divine Son in her arms. "My daughter," said the Blessed Virgin, "three days more of prison, and then, after a great combat and terrible torture, thou shalt quit this state of pain." Then the celestial vision disappeared, leaving the heart of Filumena filled with divine courage, and the foul prison perfumed with a heavenly odor.

Dioclesian at last despaired of bending the resolution of his captive, and determined to punish her. "Since she is not ashamed to prefer to an emperor like Dioclesian," he said, "one who was condemned by his own nation to be crucified, she deserves to be scourged as he was." His cruel order was carried out, until her body was one bloody wound and she appeared to be dying. She was then dragged to her prison to die alone.

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But our Lord, to whom she was so faithful, sent two angels all in shining white, to dress her wounds with healing balm. The emperor was quickly informed of this prodigy. When she was brought before him, he beheld her with astonishment. "It is plain," said he, "that Jupiter wishes you to be empress of Rome!"

"Do not speak of Jupiter to me, who am a Christian maiden," answered Filumena

"Tie an anchor around her neck, and throw her into the Tiber!" shouted Dioclesian in a terrible rage and fury.

But no sooner was this order executed, than the two shining angels again appeared, parted the rope which bound the anchor to her neck, and while it sank to the bottom of the Tiber, Filumena, in the presence of an immense multitude, was borne gently to the shore. This miracle converted hundreds to the faith; but the emperor, hardened by his willful cruelty, ordered her to be shot with arrows. These failing to wound her mortally, she was sent back to her prison. Here she fell into a sweet and refreshing sleep, and woke to find all her wounds again perfectly healed. No sooner, however, did the emperor see this, than he again ordered the archers to aim at the defenceless child. This time, the arrows aimed at her remained suspended in the air. In his desperation, the emperor commanded them to be gathered up and made red-hot; but when shot from the bows, they turned back in their flight to pierce the archers themselves, six of whom were killed.

Terrified, but still cruel, Dioclesian commanded her to be beheaded, which was done, on the 10th of August, in the year 303 after Christ.

On the 25th of May, 1802, some Roman workmen, digging in the catacomb of Saint Priscilla on the Salarian Way, discovered a remarkable stone used to close a tomb. It was of terra-cotta, and bore many of those symbols which belong to a virgin martyr;

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viz.: an anchor, an arrow, a palm, a knotted scourge and a lily. Across the top ran this inscription:

(*Fi*) *Lumena pax tecum fi* (*at*),

which means, "Filumena, peace to thee. Amen."

In our English use of this name, as in many other oriental names, *Ph* takes the place of F; so that we know and venerate this dear young saint under the name of Philumena, the favorite saint of the holy Cure d' Ars.



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SAINT CHRISTOPHER.

HOW the giant of Canaan looms up before us through the ages! For the story of Saint Christopher, the man so strong and so simple-hearted, has never lost its charm. The name of this giant among his countrymen was Offero, or Bearer; that is, one who carries great burdens. So proud did he become of his wonderful strength, that he determined to serve only the most powerful monarch in the world; and he set forth from the land of Canaan to find him. At last he came to a country ruled by a king, who was called the most powerful king in all the world. "This is the king I will serve, then," said Offero.

As he strode through the halls of the vast palace to the audience-room of the king, how careful were all the courtiers to keep out of his way; and when he had passed them, how they gazed after him in fear and in wonder! No one dared to deny this giant an entrance to the presence of the king. The king alone was in no way afraid; but when Offero came before him he treated him as a friend, saying: "What favor dost thou ask of us?" And Offero, the man so strong and so simple-hearted, replied: "I come to serve you, O king, for I hear that you are the most powerful king in all the world."

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"Right royally do we welcome you, good stranger. Tell us your name."

"Offero," said the strong man; "for I can bear great burdens."

"Thou shalt have no other burden than the protection of our royal person," said the king, with a smile. "Henceforth, stand always next our throne." And this was the place which Offero, the giant, had in the service of the king.

One day, as Offero stood beside the monarch, a wandering minstrel was brought in, to play before the king and to amuse him. In his song the minstrel spoke often of Satan, the prince of evil; and every time he did so the king quietly blessed himself with the sign of the cross; for he was a Christian. When Offero saw the king make this sign, he wondered in his heart what it could all mean; and when the minstrel had gone out from the king's presence, he said: "Why did your majesty make this sign upon yourself while the minstrel sang?"

The monarch did not wish to answer this question; but Offero, who had the simplicity of a child with the stature of a giant, said: "Unless you tell me, O king, I will no longer serve you."

The king knew that no one could hinder Offero from leaving the place if he chose to go, and he answered: "Then if you must know, my good Offero, it was for this reason: every time I heard the minstrel name the devil, I signed myself with the sign of the cross, lest this wicked Satan might have some power over me to harm me."

"If you fear the devil," said Offero, "and foresee that he might harm you, then the devil is stronger than you, and you are not the most powerful prince in all the world. I will seek out this Satan, and him I will serve." So saying, the giant strode from the palace of the king.

Offero traveled far and wide, but without success, when one day, as he was crossing a wide desert, he saw a great army,

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soldiers from every nation under heaven, and at their head marched a being of a most terrible aspect, but with the air of a conqueror, and this leader asked Offero where he was going. "I am looking for Satan," said our giant, "that I may serve him; for he is more powerful than any king."

"I am he whom thou seekest," said this hideous leader of the great army out of all nations and people. And Offero became one of his followers. But as they continued their route, bent on some cruel errand of plunder or of murder, they came to a place where four roads met; and, as was the custom in those times, a cross was placed at the meeting of the ways. No sooner did Satan and his army see this cross, than they turned from the highway into a path rocky and choked with thorns; but they did not seem to mind anything, so great was their haste to get out of sight of the cross. Offero, who had taken his place at the right hand of Satan, saw all this with great astonishment. As soon as any one had a chance to take breath, he said to Satan: "Why have we thus left, in haste, the highway, to stumble along this rocky path?" The leader, who had worn all along such an heroic face, began to look very much like a coward, and he did not wish to answer Offero; but the giant said: "Unless thou tell me, Satan, I will leave thy service." Then the devil answered: "Upon that cross Jesus Christ died; and when I see it, in spite of myself I tremble and fly." Then our Offero, the man so strong and so simple-hearted, said: "If thou art afraid of the cross on which Jesus Christ died, how much stronger must this Christ be than thou, O proud Satan! Therefore I will no longer serve thee." And Offero struck off from the prince of evil without once looking back. No sooner, however, did he find himself alone, than a wish seemed to fix itself in the heart of Offero like an arrow. "I can never rest," said he, "nor can I taste bread, until I have entered the service of Jesus Christ, who is more powerful than any king on earth, or than Satan himself." These

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words had no sooner come from his lips than he saw a hermit sitting at the opening of a cave, weaving his baskets, with his prayer-beads of small stones and his cross at his side. Offero walked straight up to the hermit, saying: "Canst thou tell me how I can serve that Christ Jesus who is more powerful than any king, and even than Satan, the prince of evil?"

The hermit raised his eyes mildly from his basket to the face of the giant, and without any fear of his great stature and great strength, replied: "This king, whose service thou art seeking to enter, will require many painful things of thee. Thou wilt be expected to obey his will instead of thine own, and often to keep thy fast."

"Let him command me to do some other thing than fasting, for this I have never done," said Offero.

"Then," continued the hermit, weaving a little branch of willow into his basket, "then, my good friend, thou must say many prayers in place of thy fast."

"But," said Offero, "I do not know how to pray; and yet I wish with my whole heart to serve thy Christ."

The hermit was touched by the earnest tone of the strong man before him; but he fastened the end of the osier twig in its place in the basket, and then pointed to a deep and rapid stream flowing over sharp rocks. This stream was often swollen by rains, and many a traveler had there lost his life. "Thou canst not fast, my friend and thou dost not know many prayers, but our Lord Jesus Christ will not refuse thy service. Take thy stand on the bank of that deep and rapid stream; it is wide, and the current is strong, and the bed is uneven; but, if thou wilt serve Christ, carry over the stream the travelers who call on thee for help."

Offero was full of joy when he heard the task given him by the hermit, and went his way with a most glad countenance. His first care was to make a staff for himself from a palm tree; and then

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he waited, this man so strong and so simple-hearted, on the bank of the river, for some traveler who would call for help. Many a one did he thus carry on his broad shoulders, and to Offero they seemed lighter than feathers, so joyful was he in this service of Jesus Christ. In a few days he had built himself a cabin of boughs, close by the river side, that he might hear the least call even when asleep. Meanwhile he had learned many things of the master he was serving, from the good hermit. He signed himself with the sign of the cross, and he had learned how to pray. He could not say long prayers, but he said very fervent ones, and they seemed to please his master, for every day the good Offero grew happier and happier in his service. Winter had followed summer and summer had followed winter many times, when, one dark and stormy night, as Offero rested himself in his cabin, he heard a weak voice, like the voice of a child, saying: "Good Offero, come and carry me over the swift river!" Offero made all haste, but, when he came to the river bank, he could see no one; so he went back to his cabin and lay down on the mat which the good hermit had woven for his bed. But he was no sooner dropping asleep than the same shrill voice called out: "Good Offero, come and carry me over the swift river!" And again he went out, but could find no one; and again he came back to his cabin, and lay down on his mat; but no sooner was he dropping asleep, than the same shrill voice called out: "Good Offero, come and carry me over the swift river!" This time, when he went out, he found on the river bank a child, small, but of marvelous beauty, and the child held out his hands to the man so strong and so simple-hearted, saying: "Good Offero, carry me on thy shoulders over the stream so swift and so dark!" And Offero took up the child as if he had been a feather, and set him on his shoulder with one hand, while the other grasped his palm-tree staff. But no sooner had Offero stepped into the stream than the child on his shoulder grew

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heavier than any man he had ever carried and the stream rose, like a mighty torrent, to the very breast of the giant. For a moment his strength seemed to fail him, and the palm-tree shook in his hand like a reed; but all at once our Offero bethought himself of the prayer he had learned from the good hermit, and he offered his service to Jesus Christ, his heavenly master, saying: "All for thee, my Jesus, my Jesus, all for thee!" No sooner had he said this, than his feet touched the farther shore, and setting the child down on the green bank, while great beads of sweat dropped from his forehead, he said: "Whoever thou art, O child, thou hast put me in great peril this night; and so heavy didst thou become, that I think the whole world would not have set so weightily on my shoulders." But even as Offero spoke, a mild light played round the head of the child, and he answered: "Wonder not, good Offero; for know that this night thou hast carried not the world on thy shoulders, but he who made the world. I am the Christ, for whose sake thou hast given thy service these many years; henceforth thou shalt be called not Offero, but Christopher, because thou hast carried Christ over the swift river on thy willing shoulders. In token of this same, and that I am indeed the Christ, plant, now, thy dry staff in the ground and to-morrow thou shalt find it covered with leaves and fruit." Offero, now Christopher, with heavy blows, planted his dry staff, cut years before, in the ground; and when he turned to worship the beautiful child whom he had served so long, he had disappeared. All that night Christopher watched for his coming; but when the morning came, lo! his staff was again a palm-tree, covered with leaves, and most delicious dates hung from the stem. "Surely," said Christopher, "I serve the most powerful and the most amiable of masters;" and he sat himself down, as before, to watch for travelers who wished to cross the stream.

At length the master whom he had served so faithfully and so

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long on the river bank, put it into the heart of Christopher to go to Samos, a city of Lycia, in Asia Minor. He had service to be done there by Christopher, the holy man so strong and simple-hearted; yet, when Christopher came to the city he found that he could not speak the language, nor could he understand any one who spoke to him. What should he do? It never came into Christopher's mind that he could study the language of these people; but he knew the master he was serving. Without a moment's hesitation, he kneeled down and prayed to Jesus Christ to give him the grace to understand and speak this strange tongue. There were many Christians in the city of Samos, and a terrible persecution was going on against them. Officers were abroad hauling the Christians by the arms or even hair, as if they were criminals, before the tribunal of the governor. They saw this giant on his knees as they had seen other Christians, but they thought he was an idiot and did not touch him. Rising from his knees Christopher found that he understood every word that he heard around him. From the talk in the streets he learned that the Christians of Samos were hunted by the pagans rulers like so many wolves, and he had only to follow the crowd to go to the very place where they were tortured. When he entered this dismal place of torment and saw these sufferers stretched upon the racks, burned with hot irons and torn with hooks, this man so strong yet so simple-hearted, cried aloud to them: "Be of good courage, my brothers, and suffer unto the end for Christ Jesus."

Hearing this fearless exhortation among the crowd, and perceiving that it could come from no other one than this man of giant stature, the judge ordered him to be struck on the face. Christopher turned to the judge: "Sir, if I were not a Christian I would take swift vengeance for this outrage!" Going out, he planted his huge staff firmly on the ground, and prayed to God that it might again put forth leaves and fruit, in order to convert the people. And so it was that God listened to the prayer of

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his servant Christopher; for immediately the dry staff stood, before all the city, a palm tree in full leaf, and bearing delicious dates. At this sight, eight thousand persons were converted in one day.

It could not be that such a man would be allowed to go at large. The king of Lycia took it upon himself to send officers to arrest Christopher. These men found him at prayer; and so grand was the expression on his face, so grand, too, the figure of the gigantic man bowed before God, that they prayed with him. When Christopher rose from his knees he said to these men, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "The king has sent us to lead you to him, pinioned." Christopher replied, "Unless I please you can never be my masters, because of my great strength." And the men said, "True; and unless you will go with us of your own will, we shall tell the king that we could not find you." "No," said Christopher, "you shall tell no lie on my account, for I will go with you. Tie my hands behind my back, and lead me to the king." The men fell on their knees as he said this, exclaiming, "What dost thou command us to do? We, too, are Christians, seeing thy fidelity to so great a master!" And they entreated him to allow them to save him, but Christopher insisted upon being led to the king. When the king, whose name was Dagnus, saw this giant stalking in before him, although Christopher was bound, he fled from his throne with fear. His slaves raised him up, and then he found courage to look Christopher in the face, and asked him his name.

"Before I was baptized," said this holy man, "they called me Offero, but now I am called Christopher."

"Thou hast given thyself a silly name, in taking that of Christ who was crucified, and who can do nothing for himself nor for thee."

"With good reason," returned Christopher, "hast thou been

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called Dagnus; thou art the death of the world and the companion of the devil."

Then the king shouted, "Tie this untamed savage, this Christopher, to a pillar, and let four hundred archers pierce him through and through with their arrows!" But the arrows flew from the bows of the archers only to remain in mid-air, nor did so much as one touch the body of Christopher. Then Dagnus, in a rage, began to insult him, when one of the arrows flew, and pierced the king's eye. Roaring in his agony, he cried out, "Strike off his head!" And Christopher, the man so strong and so simple-hearted, called in a loud voice to the king, "O, Dagnus, my end is at hand! but take the earth that is wet with my blood, and lay it on thy wounded eye, and thou shalt recover its full use."

"Strike off his head, I say!" roared the king; and the head of Christopher rolled on the earth. Then the king commanded them to lay the earth soaked in the martyr's blood on his eye, and lo! the pain ceased, the sight was restored, and Dagnus, like another Paul, with the recovery of his bodily sight received the gift of perfect faith!

All this came to pass about the middle of the third century after Christ, under the Emperor Decius; and the Church honors Saint Christopher, the man so strong and so simple-hearted, on the 25th of July.



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SAINT ROSE OF LIMA.

"WE should have named our little one, Rose, our Peruvian Rose, instead of stately Spanish Isabel. See the twin roses on her cheeks!" and Jasper Florez kissed with tenderness the little one's cheeks as she lay in her cradle. "Yes," he continued, to his wife, Mary Oliva, "we will call her Rose, our own Peruvian Rose."

"But what will my sister Isabel say?" replied his wife.

"She will, herself, call the child Rose; for how can she help it, with these twin roses on her innocent cheeks?" and again and again he kissed his little daughter.

To Mary Oliva, who was descended from an Inca, or native prince of Peru, all this was most pleasant to hear. "My husband," she said, in her own heart, "with all the pride of his Spanish race, loves Peru; and like myself is proud of the Inca blood in the veins of our children. Isabel, when she hears what he has said, will not mind the child's forgetting her Spanish name. She is indeed a rose, and Rose we will call her." From that day she was known in the house as Rose instead of Isabel, which was the name she had received in baptism, when held at the font by her mother's sister and named for her.

When Christian Spaniards landed in Peru in the year 1531, they found a people highly civilized; gentle, polished; their king,

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or Inca, living in a magnificent palace, and his nobles attended like princes of the blood in other countries. The religion of these Peruvians acknowledged the sun as the symbol of the god they adored; and worship and sacrifice were offered to the sun as to a supreme being. As among the ancient Greeks and Romans, there were certain persons among them who were believed to know the mind of the gods, and to declare it; and these persons were called oracles. They corresponded, precisely, to those sibyls of Greece and Rome, whose words were accepted by the people as prophecies,—and these prophecies were treasured up in the memories of the people, whatever slight might be put on them by the learned. It is certain that God, from time to time, has permitted these oracles, or sibyls, to announce to heathen nations some hint of an event which was for their salvation; and which might prepare their minds to receive the truth when preached by faithful witnesses. There is an altar in the church of Ara Cœli, in Rome, built over the spot where a heathen oracle once sat, and predicted, by some special inspiration of God, the incarnation of his Son. In the same way, God seems to have allowed one of the oracles of heathen Peru, to predict the birth and virtues of a child of the Incas, long before Christianity came among them. The prophecy ran thus: "When a strange (or foreign) race shall conquer Peru, the sun will claim his bride from among the daughters of the Incas, and thus the family of the children of the sun may return whence they came." This tradition has come down to the present day among the Peruvians, and they believe it to have been fulfilled in the only canonized saint of America, Saint Rose of Lima.

Although the Spaniards conquered Peru, they did not degrade the reigning race or the nobles. There was a short struggle among the Peruvians to keep their superstitious worship and terrible human sacrifices; but it ended in their becoming Christians during the very century, almost generation, in which they were

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conquered. This accomplished, through the labors of the zealous and holy monks sent out to them from Spain, there was no rivalry between the two races. The Spaniards respected the rank of the Peruvian nobles, and to this day the blood of the Incas is not only a mark of honorable distinction, but is the boast of the highest nobility. When, therefore, our little Rose was born in the year 1586, only fifty years after the conquest, she was noble by right of her Peruvian mother, in whose veins flowed the blood of the Incas, as well as on the father's side, who came from a Spanish family of high descent. A rose, but without its thorns, she was always gentle, and a sweet seriousness pervaded all her actions. Yet most wonderful of all, was her courage and patience under suffering. When only three years old, her baby thumb was caught under the lid of a chest; but although the pain was severe, she hid her thumb instead of complaining or crying. When her mother discovered it, the hurt was so serious that a surgeon was called, and a painful operation was performed. But even this she endured without the least resistance, and without a groan. While still a mere child, her parents were astonished to see her putting aside the little dainties of which children are so fond; and as they began to watch her, they found that she took, in their place, the coarsest, least relishing food on the table. Even the luscious fruits of Peru were set aside for the stalk of some unsavory herb; and her food became, at length, bread, water and pulse.

When Rose was only five years old her brother, while playing with her, threw, accidentally, a piece of soft mud against her hair. From her birth she had never shown any violence of temper, nor did she show it now. She only turned from her brother and was leaving him; when he said, gravely: "Do not be displeased, my sister; I did not mean to do it. Besides, the ringlets of girls are sometimes cords that draw them to perdition." He said this with all the majesty of one of those Dominican preachers,

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who were heard at that time in Peru, warning the people against sins and vanities. The little Rose only said, very gently: "Thank you, my brother;" but his words sank deep into her heart. She began to question herself about the pleasure she took in being praised, and as she remembered having been told that her name, Rose, had been given to her on account of her beauty as an infant, she began to dislike it. But one night, dreaming of this, she saw the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom she told her uneasiness. This heavenly Mother, who is called "A rose among thorns," replied to her: "Your name, dear child, is very pleasing to my son; thenceforth you are to call yourself Rose of Mary." This gave the little girl great delight. The next day, when she went among her own small flower-beds in her mother's garden, she seemed to notice, for the first time, the rosemary, with its delicate branches growing out of its stalk in a way to form a cross each time. Seeing and noticing this, she flew in a transport to the rosemaries, kissed their leaves and their branches, and called them her own rosemaries. From this time the rosemary was always found in her garden beds; and close beside it would grow also some bitter herb, like the wormwood, which she could bite and hold on her tongue to mortify her sense of taste without being chided. One day the wife of the viceroy of Peru, walking through her mother's garden, noticed these rosemary plants as more flourishing than any she had ever seen, and was struck with a sudden admiration for them. "Oh, my dear Rose," she exclaimed, "how delighted I should be to have such a stalk of rosemary in my garden! You must have some charm about you to make them flourish as they do; still I should like to see if rosemary will not grow in my garden." The viceroy's wife said this, partly in the spirit of ladies of the world who are in the habit of complimenting each other, and partly from a sincere reverence for the holy and mortified life which she knew our

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Rose was leading. As she was leaving Rose and her mother, she said, smiling: "Be sure to send me a rosemary!"

Our Rose loved, of all things in the world, to gratify the innocent wish of a friend; and she could not find it in her heart to refuse this trifling request. But her love for her rosemary was something more than the love of a florist for a plant, however rare or beautiful. As she went back to her rosemary, to choose one of them for the grand garden of the viceroy of Peru, she could not help kissing the one she had selected as the most proper to send; could not help kissing and laying her hand gently on the stems which set forth so plainly the Cross of her Redeemer; and she whispered in the ears of her beloved plant: "Ah my little friend, my confidant and my consoler, how lost you will feel among the gorgeous flowers in the garden you are going to. Will you not miss your humble companions, the wormwood and the creeping granadilla? And how will you thrive under the hands of a hired gardener? But never mind, my little friend; we shall be together again." And with such fond words she parted with her most flourishing rosemary.

In a few days word was sent to her that "the rosemary had drooped, no one could tell why."

"Then bring it back to me," said Rose, "I knew the Cross could never flourish in the midst of grandeur and opulence." The plant was returned to her, and, in four days it was as flourishing as ever.

Another plant which found great favor in the eyes of our young Rose of Mary, was this same "creeping granadilla." It grew everywhere, like our wild morning-glory, and nobody prized it for its beauty. But there was a mystical significance about this flower which made it dearer to Rose than even the spotless lily; for it told the story of redemption, without which there is no innocence in man for the lily to symbolize. This flower, as we have said, grows on a vine, with tendrils which clasp every

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slender twig and even stalks of grass or the stems of upright plants. The corolla has six pale purple petals, and six greenish sepals, which represent the twelve apostles. From the centre of this corolla rises a tall pistil, shaped like a column, and this represents the pillar at which our Lord was scourged. Around this pistil are five slender stamens, and on the end of each is a long anther which looks as if it had been slit with a sharp knife. These five anthers represent the five wounds of our Redeemer; while outside of these, between them and the petals, is a ring of filaments or threads, which stands around the stamens and pistils like a crown, and this represents the crown of thorns worn by our Blessed Lord during his passion and crucifixion. No person can examine this flower without a feeling of awe; and so distinctly can these symbols of the passion be distinguished by any eye, that it is commonly known among us as the "passion-flower." To our Rose, it was like a book of meditation, in which she read daily and which gave food to pious thoughts while it kindled devout affections. In truth, this lover of the passion, saw everywhere around her what reminded her of the love of her Redeemer in dying for her. In the house, the very hinges of the doors, the panels, to her eyes took the form of the cross; while in nature, she saw everywhere this dear sign; and she never saw it without a silent act of adoration to him who died on the cross, or of contrition for the sins which caused his death.

In the midst of such prosperities as seemed to promise happiness to her family, her father suddenly fell into misfortunes which caused him great anxiety; but this only brought out the most beautiful qualities in the character of our Rose. Instead of repining at the cutting off of the luxuries to which she had been accustomed, she seemed to rejoice in thus being obliged to do, what she had done, hitherto, from choice. It was a new yoke of obedience, under which she bent her head; not as the conquered armies of pagan times, with a sense of humiliation worse

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than death, but as if a new dignity had been given to poverty by being no longer dependent on her will, but on the will of God. With an alacrity not to be described, she busied herself in the work of the house; and more still. Finding it was not enough to save the expense of a servant to the family, but that money needed to be earned, she offered her service, not to a stranger, but to a friend of the family, Don Gonzalvo, to pay to him and to his wife and to his children, the same obedience which she had rendered at home, and to receive in return the usual wages of a servant. The humiliations which attended this position, and even the fatigues, were regarded by our Rose as opportunities to practice her favorite virtues, and her fidelity was equaled by her cheerfulness.

Notwithstanding the obstacles which such a state of things would seem to put in the way of a suitable marriage, the parents of Rose had no other plans for her. But the mind of this daughter, whose obedience shrank from no trial, on this point was quite made up. It was in vain that they put before her the advantages of a good marriage, the relief it would give to the minds of her friends who were anxious for her future. She had already chosen her spouse, and she would serve him, like Saint Catherine of Siena, as a humble daughter of Saint Dominic in his Third order. This allowed her to live with her family, and to serve them still. To these duties she added that of sacristan to a neighboring church, washing the linen with her own hands and cultivating flowers for the altar. Every Saturday she adorned the chapel of the rosary with the flowers from her garden, nor was she ever known to fail in this act of devotion. Even in summer, when the torrid heats of Peru had dried up all the plants, or in winter, when the gardens were desolate, this altar was always found richly decorated with flowers. She was very skillful with her needle and delighted in embroidering the vestments and laces used at the altar. She could never see them too

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rich or too beautiful. But as she feared to spend, even in this way, the time needed by her family, she took from her few hours of sleep whatever was devoted to this favorite occupation. Her confidence in God was simply unbounded, even in temporal things, which in Rose was not rashness; since she was diligent to secure them, so far as was possible, by her labors. Once when there was no money in the house nor a crust of bread, she still went to the closet and opened the chest, believing that God would provide for them all necessary things. And there, indeed, were the loaves she desired; only whiter and of a far more beautiful shape than she had ever made. Another day her brothers came home, saying: "All the honey has failed." In Peru, honey is one of the necessaries of life. Rose, full of confidence, in God, went to the place where they were in the habit of keeping the store for the year, and found honey which lasted them for eight months. Her father, the good Gasper Florez, who had deserved such a daughter, was once pressed to pay the sum of fifty livres, which he owed, but had not the means to pay. Overwhelmed with the disgrace, this good father fell sick; which Rose no sooner saw than she went to the church to pray, begging God not to allow her good father to be put to confusion. On her return, a stranger came to the house and handed her father a little purse containing exactly fifty livres. The members of the confraternity of Saint Catherine of Siena, were in the habit of carrying her image, crowned with flowers, around the town every year. Rose, whose life was so much like that of the saint she loved so well, could not bear that anyone but herself should carry the statue. When this was discovered by her companions, they were quite willing to allow her the privilege, and thenceforth, to the end of her life, she continued to pay this homage to her beloved patroness. She was also appointed to take charge of the chapel of Saint Catherine. One day as she

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was arranging the chapel, seeing the statue in need of a new robe, she exclaimed: "Oh, my dear Saint Catherine, how sorry I am that I have no money to buy a new robe for you!" Before she left the chapel, a domestic brought from Madame de Gama, a rich present for this very purpose.

It was this Rose, too poor to give a robe to the statue of her dear saint, who encouraged the people of Lima to begin the convent of Saint Catherine of Siena, and pledged her word that the money necessary to finish it should be supplied. "My dear child," said her mother, "how can you be so rash as to take upon yourself such an obligation—you who must work with your hands for your own support and for the support of your family? How visionary in you, to talk of raising a building which will cost ten thousand pounds and more, while you have not a penny to give to it!"

"God always makes good his promises," meekly replied Rose; "in a few years you will see this monastery built." Her mother grew angry at seeing Rose, as she said, persist in this extravagant notion of hers, and told her, in plain terms what she thought of her behavior, which was sure to bring contempt upon herself and her family. Instead of answering her mother in an injured tone, she replied very cheerfully: "Well, my mother, you will see all that I have said coming true; for you will enter this convent, in it receive the habit of a religious, make your vows and die in the peace of the Lord."

"I become a nun?" almost screamed the poor mother; "what has put this thought into your head, child? I am old and poor; besides, I have never in my life, had the least idea of being a nun."

"That is all true; but, nevertheless, you will see what I have said coming true, also." Strange as it may seem, strange, too, as it must have seemed to Oliva Florez, all this did come to pass.

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More than three years after the death of this holy daughter, and after her husband's death, also, Oliva Florez actually saw this monastery completed, while she received the habit of the order at sixty years of age. She took the name of Sister Mary of Saint Mary. When her novitiate was ended she was professed and died most happily a few years later.

To Rose, as to so many others of his beloved friends, our Lord was pleased to reveal the time of her death; and like all others who have been thus favored, she received the intelligence with unspeakable joy. To her it was not death, but a most happy end to her exile from heaven. It was to meet him whom she loved above all others, dear as they were to her. It was the end of all temptation, the sum and object of all her desires. Neither did it lessen her joy to be told by our Lord that all the pains of her life should bear no comparison to what she would suffer in her last illness. It would be, she considered, the last opportunity given to her to suffer for One who had suffered so much for her. What would tempt her to lose this last, this precious opportunity? Three days before she was attacked by her last illness, she bade farewell to her dear garden hermitage, where she had enjoyed so many spiritual consolations. There she prayed two days, offering acts of thanksgiving, praise and the most perfect contrition; for this innocent being, whose life was a marvel of heroic sanctity, had still tears to shed over her imperfections. For years she had worn under her veil a circle of metal in which were sharp points that pierced her head like the crown of thorns worn by our Lord. Her food had been literally sprinkled with ashes, and her life had been one of uninterrupted toil; yet had she never ceased to bewail her short-comings, and at the hour of death she renewed all the acts of contrition made during this life of innocence and of penance. A short time before her death she was continually in raptures and ecstacies; notwithstanding the tor-

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ments of her sickness, which were as much beyond the sufferings of others even on their death-beds, as her virtues were beyond those of ordinary Christians. Two hours before she expired, coming out of a long ecstacy, she turned to Father Francis Nieto, and said to him in confidence, "O father, what great things I could tell you of the pleasures and consolations which God will bestow upon his saints for all eternity! I go with inconceivable delight, to contemplate the adorable face of God, whom I have loved all my life."

She then thanked her parents for all their patience and kindness to her; also those who had nursed her in her illness, especially Don Gonzalvo and his wife. She exhorted their daughters to a good and holy life, and then spoke privately with her two brothers, urging them to the practice of virtue and commending to them her good mother. Towards midnight, seeing the time of her death drawing near, she asked her brothers to remove the bolster from under her head, and to place there two pieces of wood in the form of a cross. Upon this cross, which she had loved so much, she said twice: "Jesus be with me! Jesus be with me!" and immediately her ardent soul quitted earth for heaven. For her we can believe there was no purgatory; for she had carefully expiated her imperfections in the burning furnace of penitential love.

Her death took place on the 24th of August, in the year 1617, having lived thirty-one years and five months. Thus died the first, and even to the present time, the only canonized saint of America, whether North or South. Her life, from the age of five years, was one continued protest against the love of wealth and of power which is the curse of America; a protest against the vanity of American girls; a protest against their love of a worldly rather than of a religious life; a protest against their contempt of mortification and the practice of penance. It is a life which

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American girls may well read, and remember and ponder upon. Not to copy, literally, her mortifications, which were so exalted, so beyond the strength of common Christians, but in order to sound the fountains of her love for God and of her desire to respond, by her own sufferings, to the love of Jesus Christ suffering and dying for us upon the Cross.



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SAINT BEGA.

IN the northwest of England, between the hills bearing its name and the Irish Sea, lies the far-famed Cumberland, or Lake Country; made dear, even to those who have never seen—can never hope to see—its varied charms of peak, cliff, lake and valley, by the pen of more than one poet. To none of these poets is this beautiful region more indebted than to Wordsworth, who was born, lived, and died among the scenes made immortal by his verse. We seem, while reading his delightful pages, whether "Poems of the Affections" or "of the Imagination," whether the "Sonnets," "The Excursion," or "The White Doe of Rylstone," to walk with him, to see with his eyes, to hear with his ears, and the very names recall to us a thousand delicate charms of sentiment or of description. This Cumberland, or Lake Country, including Westmoreland and part of Lancashire, with their Windermere, Grasmere, Rydalmere, is the delight of tourists, a very home of poets. But how many of those who find their way to these lakes, set like sapphires among the hills,

"*Ranging the heights of Scawfell or Black-comb,*"

or passing still nearer to the western coast in order to catch

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glimpses, on a clear day, of the far-off peaks of the Isle of Man, and the marvellously clear waters of its shore, or

"*Climb on hands and knees,*
For some rare plant, yon Headland of Saint Bees,"

remember the charming story of the beautiful Irish princess, to whom the headland owes its name, and whose glory will live when Windermere, Grasmere and Rydalmere have shriveled under the heats of an all-consuming fire? Yet the story of Saint Bega, or Saint Bees, still lives on this grand coast, and English poets, who never invoke the aid of her prayers, still love to use her name to point their choicest rhymes. Let us, then, gather up the records of this wonderful life, which, for more than a thousand years, has kept green the places where it passed so benignly, or where it paused for a few years on its tranquil course.

It must have been in the very beginning of the seventh century, although the year and day of her birth has not come down to us, that the reigning king of Ireland was gladdened by the birth of a little daughter whom they christened Bega. This was less than a century and a half after the death of Saint Patrick; and the conversion of the Irish chiefs at Tara, by this great apostle of the Emerald Isle, secured to the little princess her birth-right as a Christian. It was from the mighty men of counsel and of war, assembled at the court of Laeg-haire Mac Neill at the *Fes of Tara*, that the faith descended to the poorest peasant of the isle; and it was associated in the Irish mind and imagination with all the glories of her royalty and all the prowess of her best warriors. The little Bega grew up, therefore, even in the midst of court life, among the choicest traditions of Christian perfection, and with that love of chastity which seems to have been one of the marks of the high vocation of her race and people. When a mere child she pledged herself, by a vow, to have no other bridegroom than Jesus, whom she had been taught

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to love under the sweet title of "Spouse of Virgins." One day, as her young heart and soul were rapt into an innocent ecstasy over this dear privilege of a Christian child, picturing to herself, not the glories of a magnificent career as queen of some foreign country, to which she would be taken in the pomp of a royal procession as the bride of a powerful and handsome young prince, but the joy of living, all the time of her mortal existence, as the affianced bride of the King of Heaven, to enter, at death, into the full enjoyment of his eternal presence, an angel stood beside the little princess. Now the angels are very careful not to frighten the innocent children to whom they are sent on errands of love. Bright and shining as he was, he did not dazzle the eyes of little Bega, but stood beside her so quietly, looked down upon her so amiably, that she knew he was her friend; and as she had never seen, even among the noblemen of her father's court, any one so majestic, and yet so tender, she knew he must belong to the court of the King of Heaven,—to the court of her Bridegroom. The angel saw this look of pleasure and of recognition in the eyes of our Bega, and returned her sweet smile with one more beautiful still, if possible. But as the angels never loiter when sent on their holy errands, the one sent to the lovely daughter of the king of Ireland lost no time in giving his message. Little Bega saw, in the shining hands of the angel, a beautiful bracelet, which he held out to her, saying: "This is the token which your spouse, Jesus Christ, sends to the princess Bega as an assurance of his great love for her, and as a proof that her love for him is accepted. Take, then, beloved child of a mortal king, this dowry sent by my hand; for he has done by you as by the mystical spouse of the Canticle of Canticles, when he said: *Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*" As she put out her hand to receive this gift of her celestial Bridegroom, the angel clasped it on her arm, and she saw that it was marked with the cross of Christ.

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Full of joy at this recognition of her vow of chastity, she had no longer any hesitation in giving herself up to the sweet service of heaven, and day succeeded day only to find the beautiful child growing still more beautiful in the sunshine of her unspeakable happiness. But although the Irish princes and chieftains, as well as their king, were all Christians and proud of the name, yet they were like many people of the present day who think they may reach heaven, and still have a share of the good things of this world; and they could see no harm in making a grand match for the little Bega, even if the suitor was the pagan son of the pagan king of Norway. "Very likely," they said among themselves, "the princess Bega will convert the young prince if he is once her husband; and then we shall see all the people of Norway as good Christians as ourselves." To have heard these grave chieftains talking over the matter of the offer of the hand of the young prince-royal of Norway, to the princess Bega, one might have supposed that they were thinking only of converting Norway. But sincere lovers of souls do not begin the conversion of a country by compelling a young princess to break her solemn vow to Jesus Christ. We can always tell when people are thinking more of some worldly advantage than of spiritual ones; for they are sure to begin by setting aside some law of God or of his Church. The king and his counsellors knew very well the story of the bracelet marked with the cross; but they had a plan in their heads for making Ireland more powerful than ever, and they did not intend to take any notice of Bega's vow of chastity. They sent an answer, therefore, to the king of Norway, accepting the offer of the young prince's hand, and preparations were made for the royal marriage. Neither history nor legend tells us that Bega moped about her father's castle; that she threatened to die if they forced her to marry the Norwegian prince. When she had finished her own entreaty to her father to respect her vow, and was told that she had but one duty,

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to make a good Christian wife to the young pagan prince, she made no wail or moan over her hard fate. The grand preparations went on; and, very likely, some thought the young princess was not, after all, so very sorry to marry a handsome prince, only to be a queen in due time. At last the prince appeared, with his royal retinue, on the Irish coast, and was received in great pomp by the king. The next day was to witness the nuptials of Bega and the prince-royal; who was charmed with his affianced bride, saying: "Of a truth they said well, who told me I was to marry the most beautiful of all the Irish virgins."

There had been great rejoicings in the royal castle, and the feastings held long and held late; so long and so late, that the guardsmen of the king, her father, who were wont to keep their solemn night-watch with broadsword on side and battle-axe on shoulder, were snoring, like their guests, in the deep sleep of drunken revelers. Then it was that the cheerful courage of the young princess met its reward. Although she had not made her father angry with her complaints or reproaches, although she had met the prince-royal as beseemed a princess, yet her ear had been deaf to the voice of flattery, her eye blind to the pomps and pride of the royal pageant. Alone in her room, high up in one of the towers of the castle overlooking the sea, she had spent the first hours of the night in prayer; pressing, now and then, her innocent lips to the cross on the bracelet given to her by the angel, and which had never been loosened from her arm, as if to draw from it the graces needed in this great hour of her life. As the sounds of revelry died away, she rose from her knees, wrapped herself in a coarse mantle which lay at her hand, taking, of all her jewels and treasures, only the celestial bracelet, and then tripped lightly down the stair-way, through the ranks of sleeping guardsmen, through the gates whose secrets she knew so well, to the shore of the sea, where a fisherman's skiff was drawn up for the night. Into this she stepped,

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trembling, not with fear, but with joy; loosened it from its moorings, took the rough oars and was preparing to row herself, she knew not where, when the angel of her childhood stood before her as radiant, even more radiant, than ever. "Fear not, little one as thou art!" said the bright angel. "Faithful to thy vow, thou art not forgotten by him who accepted and who sealed it." Then he took his place at the prow, and the darkness of the night seemed changed to day in the eyes of the transported Bega. With her happy hand she held the rough oars; but she knew who sped the skiff on its way over the great billows. Just to the south she saw the peaks of the Isle of Man; and she even fancied that she could see the glimmer of some sanctuary lamp as she came nearer its shores; but there she would have been among her own country-people, many of whom had found a rest from the storms and then a home, among its picturesque bays and headlands. There was no sign, either, from the angel at the prow; and so, on and on sped the light fisherman's skiff past the Isle of Man, till she saw the blue Cumberland shores before her. But the voyage was not to be thus easy. The wild breezes of that northern region had little thought for the maiden skimming over the high seas, even with the holy motive of a virgin espoused to her Lord; and they set forth on their mad frolic, dashing the spray over the highest cliffs of the rocky shore, and raising the billows like mountains around the helpless Bega. The angel was still at the prow, but the heart of the maiden shot its prayer, like the arrow from the bow of the archer, straight to the heart of her Divine Spouse. The winds suddenly grew still, the great billows settled back to the peacefully rocking level of summer tide, and the boat landed, as if by some impulse of angelic hands, on the low beach off "yon Headland of Saint Bees." There the young princess found a home in the dense woods along the shores, mingling with the prayers of the anchorite the "right royal" virtues of kindness and devotion to the poor and

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the sick in her neighborhood; and at length these grateful people came to her aid, assisting her to build a house for herself and her spiritual daughters.

It is to Saint Bega, or Saint Bees, as she was called in England, that we are to look as the mother of all the nuns who once gave such lustre to the history of monastic life in the north of England. In no country have the national annals borne nobler testimony to the grandeur of the religious vocation than among the nuns of Saint Bees and of Whitby; and the first woman in Northumbria who sealed, by vow, the consecration of her virginity to the service of God under the protection of "Mary, ever Virgin," was our Irish Bega, who received the veil from the hands of the Irish bishop and spiritual son of Saint Columba of Iona, Saint Aiden. It was to the saintly charity of Saint Aiden, under the protection of king Oswald, that England owed many precious conquests to the "Bishop of souls," and Saint Bega was to him, in the pursuance of his missionary work, what Saint Bridget was to Saint Patrick in Ireland, what Saint Lioba was to Saint Boniface in Germany. To these three saintly women, these three saintly bishops committed the planting of the choicest germs of female virtue. Their convents were the nurseries of learning and of sanctity, and to such a woman as Saint Bega, an angel might well be sent to sustain her courage and to direct her course over the faithless waters. In the records concerning tbe convent of Saint Bees, which stood a little south of the bold point known by the same name even on the modern maps of England, we read that in her fervor and solicitude for the construction of her monastery, this noble woman prepared, with her own hands, the food for the masons, carried wood and stone for them when another person was needed in this service, and "ran from place to place, like a *bee* ladened with honey," as the Latin chroniclers express themselves in her praise. Down to the middle ages, this princess—born of the royal house of Ireland in its

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proudest days, before the harp was hushed in Tara's halls, or the voices of her bards had ceased to chant the wonderful deeds of her heroes, flying from a royal spouse, and embarking alone and intrepid on a strange coast, holding the rude population by the power of her zeal and her sanctity—was the patroness of English laborers. So late as the twelfth century, the bracelet brought to her by the angel was guarded with the most tender veneration. In the eyes of the faithful Catholics of those days, it was a precious relic, and upon it they compelled usurpers, deceivers, the violent against whom they had no other protection, to make solemn oath, assured that a perjury committed against a pledge so dear and so sacred could not remain unpunished. It was to Saint Bega and to her bracelet, that the farmers had recourse against the new and unjust taxes with which the lords wished to burden them. In vain the Scotch freebooters and potentates of the country, treading under the feet of their coursers the harvests of the "Cumberland-men," mocked at the complaints and threats of the clients of Saint Bega. "How can this good lady see me, and what harm can she do me?" said one. "Let her come, then, your mighty Bega," said another; "let her come, and let her do what she pleases. She can only loosen our horse-shoes." But sooner or later divine vengeance overtook the offenders and scoffers; and the swift lightning of these chastisements confirmed the faith of a whole people in the powerful intercession of one who, six centuries after her death, still protected, energetically and effectually, the captive, the oppressed, the modesty of women, and the rights of the weak, along the whole western coast of Northumbria or Cumberland.

Among the monasteries founded by Saint Bega, are those of Copeland near Carlisle, Heorthu, and Hartlepool. This last is seven miles from the mouth of the Tees. At Heorthu she appointed Saint Hilda abbess; and we are told that after Saint Bega resigned her charge of the monasteries which she had

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founded, she lived for thirty years a simple religious, with her friend and daughter in religion, Saint Hilda. At last, however, she left even this beloved friend, and retired to Tadcaster, where she died about the year 650.

We hope the time is not far distant when American travelers of Catholic ancestry (and who is not, at least in the far off generations?) will honor their intelligence, as well as their piety, by seeking out the shrines of the saints on the soil of those islands which for ages lay under the sun of Catholic faith, of Catholic devotion, and monastic tranquility. Let us not be contented with the crumbs which Protestant poetry and Protestant romance dispense to us concerning these immortal glories of the Catholic ages; but let us feed our minds and imaginations with the sublime and touching story of their achievements, which so far surpass the wonders of romance or the plots of the drama. The feast of Saint Bega is put down for the 6th of September, in Butler's "Lives of the Saints;" and Montalembert has given some of his most charming pages to Saint Bega.



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SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

NORTHEAST from Rome, and the Roman States, where the Campagna, or vast prairie which stretches far and wide around Rome, is lost in wild mountain ranges, whose sharp peaks seem to cut their way into the blue sky, lies a country named Umbria, where the leaves of the oak and the pine mingle with the pale branches of the olive. The heats of Rome are not dreamed of among those mountains; and yet the grapes ripen under that blue heaven, and the orange trees put forth their fragrant flowers and are loaded with their golden fruit. Here and there, as if the people loved to climb the highest peaks so as to overlook the wonderful valleys, are perched towns, which cling like bird's nests to the rocky sides of the mountains. Not on the very top, but on the sunny slope of one of these mountain ranges with an off-look over the valley, stands the little town of Assisi. Seen across the valley from Perugia, it dwells in a haze as golden as that of our Indian summer, and looks as if it might go up to heaven like a beautiful vision. But when we come to the little town, we find that it is a real city, with hills and valleys on a small scale; woods too; and better still, with the charm of a wonderful story always around it; on stormy days as well as sunny days; and drawing pilgrims, by the charm of this story, from every part of the world.

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Seven hundred years ago Assisi was a town full of life and gayety. People died even in Assisi, and doubtless there were many people in sorrow and anxiety and poverty. But the sorrow and the anxiety and the poverty did not come near the rich silk merchant, Peter Bernardon, who could afford to go to France for his goods. On his return from there in the year 1182, he found a little son to welcome him; and beautiful as his own city was, he remembered the beauty of France and the courtesy of its people, and he named his little son *Francesco*, or Francis, for France. The child became a man so soon, that Peter Bernardon wondered how time could fly so fast, and when Francis was twenty years old, it seemed to his father but a few years since he had named him for the land he thought next to Italy in beauty; and Francis was as beautiful as the land for which he was named. Slender and graceful, with fair skin and long hair falling in waves of gold to his shoulders, eyes as blue as the sky above him, and still more with a smile on his face which won every heart, and a voice which made the sweetest song all the sweeter to the ears of his delighted townsmen.

"Do you see that festive procession," said Lorenzo, a nobleman of Assisi, to Bernard, another nobleman standing near him on the street. "Torches which make the street bright as noonday and carrying the richly attired king of their banquets, sceptre in hand, on their shoulders, with songs chanted to the viol and tambourine. If a youth could be spoiled by flattery, one would think this handsome Francesco would be. Yet it is not his beauty which makes him so popular, everybody says, but the noble charm of his manner, the ingenuousness of his mind. His gayety is never wanton, but has a poetic grace in it, which makes you believe that he sings his own songs to his own airs. They seem to belong to him as much as to any songster in the groves."

"Perhaps," said Bernard of Quintavalle, "his alms-deeds, his love for the poor, have kept him innocent, have preserved him

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from vanity; for I hear that he never refuses an alms which is asked for the love of God. There must be some special grace in this, which will go very far to save him from the ill effects of his dangerous popularity."

"This may be," replied Lorenzo, musingly. "I should never expect a son of Peter Bernardon to be over generous. Peter is honest, but thrifty; and while he would not refuse an alms to one in great need, the alms would be no larger than would satisfy his conscience. Francesco, on the contrary, as you say, loves the poor, and his alms are proportioned not so much to their need as to his own generosity. We must keep an eye upon this Francesco; for he is bound to be the glory or the scandal of Assisi."

During these happy years, when life seemed like one joyous holiday to Francesco, a quarrel between the two Umbrian cities, Perugia and Assisi, became a war. Our Francesco was not one to stay at home while his fellow-citizens went out to fight for the honor of Assisi; so we find the gay favorite of society, the poet and the singer, become a soldier. How his heart beat to the martial music! How cheerfully he bore the long marches, the camping in tents or under the blue sky! How gayly he chatted over the coarse soldier's rations! "It was all so new," they said, "to Francesco; and he loves novelty." But when, by the hard fortune of war, Francesco was taken prisoner by the Perugians, there was very little novelty to keep up his spirits. There was no martial music, and even the coarse rations of the soldier were better than prisoner's fare. But our Francesco was still gay; and for a whole year he was the life of the little band of patriots shut up in the prison of Perugia. His companions declared they should die of home-sickness but for Francesco; and never, in the happy, thoughtless days and festive nights of his youth in Assisi, had he been so charming as while a prisoner, trying to lighten the gloom and despondency of his companions. At last the year came to an end, and the young Assisians returned to

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their city, to sing the praises of Francesco to all their friends. Perhaps, in spite of all his cheerfulness, Francesco suffered as much from the privations of prison-life as any of his companions. Certain it is, not long after this he was seized with a long and dangerous illness. But as there had always been a vein of piety running through his generosity, and a wonderful innocence through his gayety, so in his sickness we find Francesco not only patient but deeply impressed by the lessons which sickness gives. A certain thoughtlessness was forever gone from his manner, and his face had a serious sweetness more attractive than the early gayety. His convalescence was very slow. One day as he walked out into the pleasant sunshine and felt the mild airs of that mountain region fan his thin cheeks, he was tempted to stroll out to the very edge of the city, where he could overlook mountain and valley and swift streams running to the sea. But the sight of this beauty, which once made him so light-hearted, brought a strange melancholy to his soul. For the first time he realized that this beauty was only mortal,—must some day pass from the eyes of all other men as well as from his own. And with this thought came another; that this was not his home; that he was an exile from heaven, his true country, just as he had been an exile from his beloved Assisi while in Perugia. The false charm of life had gone at once for Francesco, and in his heart he felt a pain which never left him again, and which some saint has called "the soul's home-sickness for heaven." The gayeties which had once charmed him, no longer gave him pleasure. No matter what he did, there was a strange, unsatisfied mind in the bosom of Francesco.

While thus going through, what some looked upon, no doubt, as one of the phases of his convalescence, he rode out of the city one day for the sake of finding some enjoyment, and was dressed as became the son of the rich silk merchant, Peter Bernardon. On the road he met a gentleman of his acquaintance who had

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been wealthy, but was then poor; so poor as to be meanly clad, and to look like one beneath his rank. The salutation usual between friends in Assisi, had scarcely been exchanged, when Francesco sprang from his horse, laid his hand on the shoulder of his friend, saying: "You must do me a favor; exchange suits with me as soon as possible. Ask no questions, but oblige me." The poor gentleman was taken completely by surprise. His only thought was to oblige Francesco; but no sooner was Francesco out of sight on his swift horse, than his friend, seeing himself in possession of a suit of perfectly new clothes instead of his shabby ones, understood what Francesco had done, and with such delicacy as to put the delicacy and pride of his friend altogether off its guard. That night as Francseco slept, he dreamed that he was in a magnificent palace, the walls encrusted with polished marbles and carved ivories, such as he had read of in Assyria and ancient Greece. And this magnificent palace seemed stored with all sorts of military weapons, and each weapon was marked with the sign of the cross. And he seemed, in his dream, to hear some one tell him that these weapons belonged to him and to his soldiers. When Francesco awoke and recalled his dream, he thought, with the natural love of glory strong in his heart, that the dream had come to tell him that he should be a great captain, and gain illustrious victories which would make him famous the world over. Fully possessed by this idea, and knowing that a great commander was stationed with his army only a short distance from Umbria, he desired to join this army and serve this great captain. But our Lord is not one to allow his chosen ones to misunderstand him. At Spoleto, on his way to Pouille, where the army lay, Francesco had another dream, in which our Lord appeared to him, saying: "Francis, which can do the most for you, the master or the servant; the rich man or the poor?" "Surely," replied Francesco, "the master and the rich man." "Then," said our Lord, "why do you leave me, who

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am the master of all things, and possess infinite riches, in order to join a mere mortal with whom you can share only servitude and poverty?" "Lord," said Francesco, "what wilt thou have me to do?" "Return to Umbria; the vision which I sent to you in your sleep, did not promise temporal grandeur, but supernatural grandeur. The army to which I have called you, is not a bodily one but a spiritual one; and the combat is not to be with your fellow-men, but with the world, with sin and with Satan. Neither do I promise to arm your soldiers with lances and swords, but with the spirit of mortification and of penance."

Francesco returned to Assisi, but not to its pleaures. From the hour in which this vision was given to him, his soul was penetraed with the love of self-denial, with the love of penance. He returned to his business, but took every opportunity to go to some quiet spot where he could put himself immediately in the presence of God. One day as he was riding out of the city and seeking some retired grove, a leper stepped before him in the road. The sight of this unhappy man, covered with disgusting sores, filled him with such horror that he turned his head away, resolved not to see him again, and reined his horse to one side in order to pass the leper. But immediately he was reminded of the resolution which he had taken to overcome all his natural dislikes, all his self-love. Checking his horse, he alighted, embraced the leper, gave him an alms, endeavored to console him in his disgrace, and remounted his horse. After riding a few paces he turned to look at the leper, who was not to be seen, neither could Francesco discover any place from which he could have appeared or in which he could have hidden himself so suddenly; and he believed that the leper was no other than "the man of sorrows," described and foretold by the prophet Isaias: "And we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted;" even Jesus Christ himself; and the heart of Francesco was filled with an indescribable joy. Prayer became

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an absorbing delight, and to meditate upon the perfections of God his daily solace. It was while thus meditating, that our Lord appeared to him hanging upon the tree of the cross and repeating his own words to Francesco: "If any man will come to me, let him take up his cross and follow me." After this vision his soul became tender, and he sympathized with his divine Lord in his sufferings as he had never done before. He had never been called proud, for he was too amiable to treat any one with haughtiness; but now, Francesco was actually humble. He had always been generous to the poor; but now he could not be satisfied to have them ask for alms; he sought out the poor and gave them what they needed before they could ask him. Instead of turning away his head from the lepers, he went to their hospitals and tended them with his own hands, and rendered them every service which a brother could give. The priests of poor parishes were his special charge, and he took care to provide their humble sanctuaries with everything needed for the honor of the divine sacrifice of the mass; and, at last, his devotion urged him to visit Rome, as a pilgrim to the tombs of the apostles. With an ardor not to be put into words, he prostrated himself on the lowest pavement of Saint Peter's, before that altar in the crypt under the great church, where lie the relics of the fisherman of Galilee, and prayed with all the fervor of his soul. But when he rose from his prayers, he was shocked to find how few of the many who visited this shrine left alms behind them in order to finish and to beautify so august a sanctuary. "Alas!" he said, "how cold is devotion! Why do not people give all they have and themselves even, when they come to the spot where repose the precious relics of Saint Peter, prince of the apostles? Why do they not adorn, with all possible magnificence, that *stone*, upon which Jesus Christ has founded his Church?" and while saying these words he took all the gold he had with him, and threw it upon the tomb of Saint Peter. Coming out of the church, upon the

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steps overlooking the vast square of Saint Peter's, he saw crowds of beggars. His heart could not resist their outstretched palms; and he gave them all the silver he had with him. Then, seeing one beggar clothed more miserably than any of the others, he gave him his fine clothes, taking, in exchange, the rags of the beggar; and thus clad, joined their ranks and begged with them the rest of the day. When Francesco returned to Assisi, no one could help seeing the change which had come over him. It was no longer an amiable young man, frank, engaging, or even charitable, whom they saw, but one wholly bent upon perfection; upon the same perfection which our Lord had recommended to the young man of the gospel: "If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all which thou hast and give to the poor."

One morning as Francesco was strolling meditatively along one of the roads leading from Assisi, he came to the church of Saint Damien, which was old and fast falling into ruin. No sooner did he see the crucifix on the poor altar, than he laid his forehead on the pavement and repeated, three times, under an inspiration of the holy spirit, the beautiful prayer which he was in the habit of reciting so often ever afterwards: "Great God, full of glory, and you my Lord Jesus Christ, I pray you to enlighten and scatter the darkness of my mind, to give me a pure faith, a firm hope and a perfect charity. Grant, O my God, that in all things I may do according to your light and in conformity to your most holy will." The eyes of Francesco were full of tears as he said this, and with a love which no words could express, he looked at his Lord on the cross. Suddenly a voice was heard in the stillness of the solitary church, a voice which said distinctly, three times, "Go, Francis, and repair my church, which you see falling into ruin." For a few moments he remained immovable, not with terror, for the sweetness of that voice was more ravishing than any music which had ever reached the ears of Francesco. But when he came to himself he began to think

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on what the voice had commanded him to do; "and this, certainly," he said, "means to repair this poor church of Saint Damien." Without a moment's delay he rose from his knees, took the road back to Assisi, and the street leading to his father's store. Going to the shelves, he took down package after package of the choice silks until he had loaded a mule; then took his way to Foligno, a city of Umbria. There he sold the silks and the mule, returned in all haste to Assisi, and presented himself before the priest of the poor, ruined church of Saint Damien with the gold in his hands. But the priest knew that the mind of Francesco was not always the mind of his father, Peter Bernardon; and he told the young man that he could not take so large an alms. In vain did Francesco urge him to take it for the love of Saint Damien; the priest knew his duty; when Francesco, who looked upon the gold as due to God, threw it into an open window of the sanctuary. Although his gold had been refused, he asked, and obtained, permission to rest awhile in the priest's house, near that poor but priviledged altar from which the crucifix had spoken to him. But all this did not go on without the knowledge of his father nor without displeasing him. "Who ever heard of a son taking his father's goods and selling them as if they were his own?" In vain did Pica, his wife, plead for her son. "Remember, Pietro," she said, "remember that Francesco did not take the goods and sell them for himself, but to build up the church of God. It may be, that Francesco acted under the inspiration of a spirit better than our own, Pietro; it may be, that God has expected from us larger alms than we have given." "If Francesco is so generously inclined," retorted Peter, "let him earn the money which he throws away so lavishly." In fact, Peter was exasperated beyond measure, and took his way to Saint Damien's, determined to bring Francesco home in disgrace; and moreover, to oblige the priest to give up the money which Francesco had given him. But when he reached Saint Damien's he found no

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Francesco. There was a lesson which even Peter Bernardon was to learn, however unwillingly; which was, that God claims, as his own, all which he has made; and that what we call our own, really belongs to God; ourselves, our friends our wealth. The good priest had not hidden Francesco, neither had Francesco hidden from his father. In truth, he had not looked upon anything he had done as an injury to his father, and had no idea of the displeasure he had given. His whole mind had been absorbed in the revelations which God was continually making of himself to this elect soul. The invisible realities, so much more real than anything we see around us, had crowded from his thoughts the fleeting, perishing interests of earth and of time. The Almighty One whom he had chosen as his lord and master, took care to conceal him even from the eyes of his father. Francesco could not be found, but the priest of Saint Damien's half-ruined church, led Peter Bernardon to the very spot where his son had thrown in at a window, the full price of the rich silks and the donkey and which had remained untouched. The sight of it softened the anger of Peter Bernardon. "At least," he thought, "the pastor of Saint Damien's has some idea of a man's right to his own goods;" and he took his gold and silver without scruple. God kept for himself what was more precious than either—the son of this same Peter Bernardon, with so great a destiny before him in the order of sanctity. When Francesco learned how serious his father's displeasure really was, he withdrew to a grotto, or cave, in the neighborhood of Saint Damien's, and there passed an entire month in prayer and fasting, living rather upon the bread of holy tears than upon the bread brought to him secretly by a servant from his father's house. But as graces flowed in upon his soul, he felt ashamed thus to hide himself from the world like some guilty one; and he resolved to return to Assisi and to suffer all the contempt which might be in store for him Nor did he wait long. No sooner did Francesco

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appear in the streets of his native town, not in the sumptuous garments of his early years, but in a worn suit and with the look and air of one who had spent a month in a cave, weeping for his own sins and the sins of the world, than he became an object of scorn, of jesting, of ridicule and insult. "Francesco has lost his wits!" said many. "Francesco is crazy—stark mad!" said others; and those who had most admired him in his days of popularity were the first to hoot and jeer and insult him. Crowds of idle boys, too, followed him on the street; and "Fool! fool! madman!" was heard on every side. And yet, had they really believed him a fool or a madman, they would have pitied him, and have tried to shield him from abuse. It was the old story of our Lord in the hands of Herod, when he ordered a fool's robe to be thrown over "the Word made flesh and dwelling among us." It was some outbreak of wicked feeling towards one whose humility rebuked their pride; whose poverty made them, in their hearts, ashamed of their own luxury. With this rabble of young and old, of friends and foes, all alike in their scorn of Francesco, he passed on through the streets of his native city, deaf to their clamors, smiling under outrageous affronts, replying to evil words by good ones, returning prayers for injuries, love for hate. The noise and uproar came to the ears of his father, who no sooner heard that his son was disgracing him, than he ran towards him, seized him by the shoulders, loaded him with blows and with reproaches and ordered him to cease his foolish behavior, and return, like a sensible man, to his old pursuits and ways of living. And when Peter Bernardon found that none of his words made any change in Francesco, he thrust him into a closet under a stairway, where he was kept hidden from the eyes of every one; Peter promising, solemnly, to keep him there until he would change his course, and be like other young men.

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Such was the ordeal to which the Lord, who had chosen to be born in a stable, had called the young, gay and worldly Francesco, before he could be trusted to do the work to which he had been called! The soul of Francesco was cruelly afflicted by this displeasure of the father he loved so much, who had formerly loaded him with kindness and with benefits; and all because the eyes of the father saw the conduct of Francesco, not as God saw it but as it was seen by his fellow men. Mortified that his son should thus ruin all his worldly prospects, he forgot the lessons given by the saints of God; while Francesco obeyed the divine inspirations with the same courage as the martyrs had done before him; never doubting, never faltering in the heavenly way, and repeating with joy the words of Saint Peter under similar treatment: "It is better to obey God rather than men."

We may believe that the mob on the streets of Assisi were not the only ones who took up the matter. Our two noblemen, Lorenzo and Bernard, did not fail to note all the circumstances of the affair, nor to compare their notes. "Which has Francesco become," said Lorenzo, "the glory or the shame of Assisi?"

"This depends," replied Bernard, "upon taking God's view or man's. Had Francesco returned to Assisi after wasting his father's goods in riotous living, the mob might well have pursued him. But to see, not a prodigal son, but a penitent fresh from a month's retreat of prayer, pressed upon by the jeering crowd, had something in it which said, the scandal and the reproach was all on our side; that God had something to teach our luxurious, thrifty generation."

"You are right," returned Lorenzo, "and Peter Bernardon will find that he is wrong. But we have not seen the end of all this."

In his second spiritual retreat, as he called it, under the stairway, what themes for meditation came to the mind of Francesco? He was not occupied in turning over and over in his thoughts the injustice and cruelty of his father, but again and again he recalled

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Saint Alexis, the young Roman noble, returning to his father's house to have the same place assigned to him as the one into which he had now been thrust himself. He had heard, all his life, the story of Saint Alexis, and on his visit to Rome had seen the stairway under which Alexis lived in his father's palace on the Aventine hill, and he rejoiced to be thought worthy to follow, so closely, the footsteps of the beloved saint of Rome. Never had meditation been such a delight, never had prayer been such a recreation. But Pica, his tender mother, whose eyes had been enlightened to read her son's conduct in the spirit of faith, did not intend to leave him to the mercy of his infuriated father. The first time Peter Bernardon gave her an opportunity to do so by his absence, she opened the door of Francesco's narrow prison. One look between the mother and the son explained all, and Francesco hastened to Saint Damien's, which had had such a charm for him ever since he heard the voice of Jesus speaking from the crucifix over its poor altar. A perfect thunderstorm of reproaches burst over the head of Pica when her husband found that she had released Francesco; yet, for once, the anger of Bernardon had no terrors for his wife. With the "spirit of understanding," one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which had come to her in regard to her son, had also come a spirit of "fortitude." She no longer took Bernardon's reproaches to heart; she merely pitied his blindness, for she saw that her very calmness aggravated him. But Bernardon declared he was not to be foiled. Francesco should no longer be looked upon as his son, unless he returned to the usual way of the family, instead of disgracing them all by his insane eccentricities. In this temper of mind he went to Saint Damien's, where he found Francesco, who had not the slightest intention of hiding from his father. No sooner did he see his son, his face thin, his hair long, his clothes worn and shabby, than his anger took the form of contempt, still harder to bear. "So, this is the way you intend to be roaming around Assisi

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with a troop of boys at your heels; pointed at, laughed at, jeered at! scorned by all who were once your associates, and bringing not only your own name but the name of your family into contempt! Let me tell you, once for all: your foolish mother may let you out of your prison, and you may succeed, perhaps, in getting a crust at her hand or the hand of a servant; but unless you return to the usual habits of the family, dress yourself properly, attend to your business and act like other people, you shall go before the bishop, and solemnly renounce all your claims as a son upon my house, my kindness and my fortune. You shall go forth the beggar you are trying to ape." Instead of bursting into tears or giving reproach for reproach, Francesco heard his father's last sentence with an expression of joy on his face more like the joy of an angel than of a man. "Let it be so, my father," he replied in a cheerful voice; a gay voice; "let us go, now, to the bishop and have this matter settled at once and forever." When they came into the presence of the bishop, Francesco seemed to desire to have his father's story heard first; and the story, as told by Bernardon, was not intended to be very complimentary to his son. But, strange to say, it seemed to have upon the mind of the bishop an exactly contrary effect to the one Bernardon expected. The tone of his voice, as he said to Francesco: "My son, have you anything to say in your own defense?" was so kind, that any one could see that it was Francesco, not Bernardon, who was in the right, according to the bishop's mind. To his question, so gently put, Francesco answered, "Nothing, my lord." "Then you renounce your claim, as a son, to your father's estate, and all manner of expectation from your family?" "I do," replied Francesco, without hesitation and even with gayety. There was nothing to be done but to make out the legal papers for Francesco to sign, whereby he was deprived of his inheritance. When the papers had been made out and Francesco had signed them, he deliberately took off his

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garments and handed them to his father, saying: "Hitherto I have called you father, on earth; but now I say with more confidence, 'Our Father who art in heaven,' in whom I place all my hope, in whom is all my treasure." The bishop, who had read aright the holy dispositions of Francesco from the first, could not see this act of renunciation without tears; and, in the same instant, threw over the bare shoulders of the young man, his own cloak, giving orders to an attendant to bring one in for him. The first garment which the attendant could lay hands upon, was the cloak of a laborer in the service of the bishop. It was brought to Francesco, who received this, his first alms, with many thanks; made a cross on the worn cloak with chalk and put it on. This happened in 1206, when Francesco was in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

Going out from the presence of the bishop and of his father, he went into the country around Assisi in order to find some retired spot where he could thank God for being thus disinherited by man in order to be more like his Lord, singing the divine praises as he went along. Coming to a wood he met a band of robbers. "Who are you?" asked the robbers, seeing this man clad only in the cloak of a laborer. "The herald of the Great King, "answered Francesco. It was winter; but these robbers were not satisfied, since he had nothing worth taking, until they had beaten him and thrown him into a ditch full of snow. Instead of repining at this treatment, Francesco rose gayly from the ditch, shook the snow from his cloak, and then went on, still singing his hymns of praise. Presently he came to a monastery which he had often passed when riding out of Assisi for pleasure. Feeling hungry, he knocked at the gate and asked for bread like any other beggar; took it when given, and went cheerfully on his way. When he reached Gubbio, some one who knew him even in his forlorn dress, took him to his house, and gave him an entire suit of clothes which were decent, though poor and mean;

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for no other than poor clothes could he induce Francesco to receive. This suit he wore two years with a girdle and shoes. While at Gubbio, he visited the lepers' hospital, serving them, washing their feet and wiping them, dressing and kissing their dreadful sores. After a time he returned to Assisi, begging all the way; not for himself; for, "having food and clothes," he was, according to the injunction of Saint Paul, fully "content;" but for the church of Saint Damien, still falling to ruin. When he came to Assisi, he continued to beg; and to beg of those who had known him rich. He was not contented with himself when he had borne railleries and contempt with patience, merely; even if these railleries had come from his father, his brothers, his acquaintances. To have received them with joy, alone satisfied his conscience; and his one effort was to root out the last thread of pride from his heart. When enough alms for repairing the church of Saint Damien had been collected, Francesco was to be found among the workmen, carrying stones, waiting upon the masons; and, at last, he had the pious satisfaction of seeing the church he loved so much in good repair. There was another church in Assisi, the church of Saint Peter, which, out of love for the prince of the apostles, remembering, too, all the graces which had come to him on his visit to his tomb, Francesco had put in repair from the alms he begged from door to door. After this he betook himself to a small ruined church about a mile from Assisi, belonging to the Benedictine monks of Subiaco, and which was called *Portiuncula*, dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. All this pleased Francesco, and he loved the deep retirement in which he found himself there. After a while he resolved to beg for this church also, and was as successful as with the two others. In 1207, Francesco saw this little church worthy of its name; not because it had a sumptuous altar, but because all was neat and devout. Here, as it proved, Francesco was to receive greater favors from our Lord than even at Saint Damien's,

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and he was to love it above all places on the earth. After living two years at our Lady of the Angels, he heard, when the gospel of the day was read, these words: *Carry neither gold, nor silver, nor a scrip for your journey, neither two coats nor a staff.* After mass he asked the meaning of these words from the priest; which he no sooner heard than he took them literally to himself. He gave away the small money which he had, left off his shoes, and wore only a tunic which he girded around him with a hempen cord; which was the dress of the poor peasants and shepherds in that country. In this dress he began to preach penance to the people of Assisi and the neighborhood, and in all Umbria. He preached with such energy, that his words pierced the very hearts of all who listened to him; and not only did they feel this contrition in their hearts, but they resolved to lead the same life of purity and of penance which Francesco was leading before their eyes.

One of the first of the noble citizens of Assisi to pause whenever he heard Francesco's voice on the street addressing the crowd, was Bernard of Quintavalle. From the hour when he had seen the once flattered, admired "king of the feast," wearing the garb of the poor and pelted on the streets of Assisi as a fool and a madman, he was drawn to Francesco. With a careful eye he noted every look, every word, every feature, of a man who had put aside his inheritance on earth to win a richer one in heaven. He saw with what gentleness he bore rude insults, with what sweetness he bore the reproaches of his family. "This Francesco," he said in his heart, "is either a great fraud or he is a great and glorious reality; the very model of the penance which he preaches on the streets of Assisi." Resolved to test this matter, he invited Francesco to take supper with him and to pass the night at his house, which Francesco did; but Bernard so arranged everything that he watched Francesco, the whole night, without any suspicion on the part of his guest. He saw Fran-

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cesco throw himself on his bed in the same coarse tunic he had worn through the day, and lie there until he had reason to believe every one in the house asleep; then rise carefully from his bed and kneel—not for an hour or two hours or three hours, but the whole night through; tears streaming down his cheeks, while he sighed, rather than spoke, these words only: "My God! my God!" as if in these words was all the sweetness which the heart of man craves. As hour after hour passed, and Bernard saw his guest thus absorbed in the prayer of the heart more than of the lips, while his eyes and hands were raised to heaven, a deep and holy peace descended upon his own soul; the peace which comes from the Holy Spirit itself when it condescends to visit us poor mortals and inspire us with generous resolutions. When morning came, Bernard of Quintavalle was ready to follow the example of Francesco. His first greeting was: "Brother Francis, my mind is quite made up to quit the world, and to obey you in all things." At these words Francesco was full of joy, nevertheless he said: "Bernard, what you propose is a work so great and so difficult that it is necessary to take counsel of our Lord Jesus Christ; to pray him to make known his will on this point, and to show us, also, how it is to be carried out. Let us go together to the bishop's chapel, where there is a good priest. We will hear mass and then remain in prayer until the hour of tierce, asking God to show us the way in which he would have us walk; and then we will open the missal three times." All this they did, and at the hour of tierce the priest, at the request of Francesco, took the missal, and having made the sign of the cross, opened it three times. The first time, the missal opened on these words of our Lord: *If thou wouldst be perfect go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and then come and follow me.* The second time the missal opened at the words: *Take no scrip for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff;* and the third time at this injunction of our Lord: *If any man will come after*

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me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Then Francesco said to Bernard, "This is the counsel given to you. Go, then, and fulfill your intention, and may our Lord Jesus Christ be praised, who has deigned to show us the way of his angelic life." Without delay, Bernard returned to his own house and with great joy sold all that he possessed; for he was very rich as well as of noble birth; distributing the price of these possessions to the widows, orphans, prisoners, monasteries and hospitals for pilgrims, in his city; and in all this he was assisted by Francesco, who acted with great prudence and fidelity. Not one gold piece was laid by for their own use. But no sooner was this accomplished, than the priest who had thrice opened the missal for Francesco and Bernard, and also Peter of Catana a canon of the cathedral, were inspired to follow these ardent lovers of perfection. Francesco gave them a habit like his own on the same day; which was the 15th of August, 1209. The same year saw another added to this little company; Giles, a native of Assisi, also; nor is there an end to the charming things told of Brother Giles. When these companions had joined him, Francis lost no time in getting the approbation of the pope, Innocent III., for his small community, going to Rome that same year of 1209. From this time the hearts of men turned towards Francis of Assisi, and soon one hundred and twenty-seven had taken the habit of the poor. At this time, calling them together, he spoke to them with great tenderness of the kingdom of God, contempt of the world, giving up their own will, mortifying their senses; "Fear not," he said, "to appear little and contemptible, or to be called by men fools and madmen. Preach penance in simplicity, trusting in him who overcame the world by humility. Take care that we do not lose the kingdom of heaven for any interest of this world, nor let us ever despise those who live otherwise than we do. God is their master as he is ours, and he can call them to himself by other ways " At this time, also, he

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drew up a rule for his community. Among other things, he wished them to labor with their hands, and to receive in return, not money, but things necessary for life. He bids them not to be ashamed to beg alms, and forbids them to preach in any place without the bishop's permission. This rule he took to Rome, to the pope, Innocent III. But although the rule was good in itself, the pope did not care to have a new order. "It would be wiser," he said, "to give vigor and fervor to an old order, by such zealous recruits." But while he still thought on this matter and commended it to God, he had a dream, in which he saw a palm tree growing up at his feet; and in another dream he saw this same Francis of Assisi propping up the church of Saint John Lateran, which seemed ready to fall. After this, he sent for Francis and approved his rule by word of mouth, although not ready to do so in writing. This was in 1210. The pope also ordained Francis deacon. Not long after this, the Benedictines gave the church of Portiuncula, or Saint Mary of the Angels, to Francis and his order. But Francis would not allow his brothers to consider it a possession; and in token of this, he sent every year to the Benedictine fathers a basket of the little fish which were found in the river, while they were careful to send Francis a barrel of oil. As the parent hive sends forth swarms of busy workers to other fields, so Francis sent forth his missionaries to other cities from the hive at Assisi; each missionary being a well drilled soldier in the army of the Great King, and trained in the school of poverty, self-denial and mortification. Such an one was Bernard da Quintavalle, now Brother Bernard, who was sent to Bologna to found a mission there. The only provision made for this work on the part of Brother Bernard, was the sign of the cross, and the spirit of obedience. Entering the city, the children, seeing him clad in so strange and so poor a habit, insulted him and even abused him in his person, throwing turf and pebbles at him, as they would at a fool. But

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Brother Bernard bore it all with good nature and with patience. Finally, coming to the square of the city he sat down on a stone, when these children began to pull the hood of his habit, to throw dirt at him and even stones; to push him, too, now this way and now that; and Brother Bernard, with the same joyous countenance, let them have their way. Nor was this for one day only. Every time he appeared on the street his young tormentors gathered around him, and he went through the same insulting treatment. The passers by took little heed of it, or only wondered why the poor vagabond did not hide himself. But among the crowd was one, a learned doctor of laws, who not only saw this going on day after day, but took in the meaning of this strange scene. As he saw the unalterable serenity of the stranger, under this shameful treatment, he said to himself: "This must be a very holy man!" When he found an opportunity to speak with Brother Bernard, he said: "Who are you? What are you doing here?" The only reply made by Brother Bernard, this man who had been so nobly born, was to put his hand into the bosom of his poor habit and draw out the rule of life given by Francesco to his community, and show it to the stranger. The learned doctor read it, and then turning to those near him, said: "Behold this rule of perfection which has been practiced before our city for three days past, as I could not believe unless I had seen it with my own eyes! Is it not a shame to allow this man, worthy of all honor as a friend of God, to suffer injury at the hands of wanton children?" Then turning to Brother Bernard, he said: "If you wish to establish a convent here, where you can serve God, I will give you a house with pleasure, for the salvation of my soul." Brother Bernard replied: "Our Lord Jesus Christ must have inspired you to do this; and for his honor I freely accept it." With all haste, this honorable judge and doctor of laws, put a house and its furniture at the disposal of Brother Bernard; and not only this, he became the special friend

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and defender of Brother Bernard and of all his companions. But before long the holy life of Brother Bernard won him so much honor from the people, that they believed themselves happy to touch the coarse habit of this poor man. In this same spirit were founded all the convents of the young order, and in ten years, these convents were to be found scattered throughout southern Europe.

The 26th of May, 1219, ten years from the foundation of the order, was a great day for Francis, "the poor little man of Assisi," as he called himself, and for all his spiritual sons. A great day, too, for Assisi; and strange indeed, it must have seemed to them, that only ten years before, this same Francis had been hooted at in their streets and called a fool and a lunatic. And stranger still must have been the thoughts of Peter Bernardon, and of his sons. "Can it be," they must have said in their hearts, "that we were mistaken, ten years ago; and that of all our family, only Pica, the mother, read Francis aright?" For on the eve or vigil of this 26th of May, which was the feast of Pentecost, that year, Assisi saw, climbing the mountain roads which led to her from all directions, groups of men clad in the one tunic worn by shepherds, with its cowl, which Francis and his monks at Assisi wore, girded with a hempen cord and their feet bare; the old and the young in the same habit, and with a joyous air full of peace and of the love of God. As these companies followed each other or met at the door of the little church of Saint Mary of the Angels, it was found that no church or convent could contain them; and still they came, until more than five thousand stood on the open plain around the *Portiuncula!* Then could Francis say, in the humility of his soul, beholding these soldiers, each marked with the saving sign of the cross, each bearing arms against the world, the flesh and the devil: "Has not thy dream come to pass, O Francis? Under how great a captain hast thou enlisted, under how great a king hast thou served!" Then it

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was, seeing how great a multitude had come together, that he ordered them to make tents of the rushes growing along the river bank, and of straw; and in these tents, as green as those under which the children of Israel kept their feast of tabernacles, the lovers of holy poverty took their rest on the bare ground, only such as were feeble, spreading rushes and straw for a bed. Thus encamped the army of Francis, the first night, on the plain near Assisi. The first time that Francis addressed them, he said: "We have promised our Lord Jesus Christ great things; but he has promised us still greater if we keep our word with him. Take no thought how or what you shall eat or drink, for God will provide. Give yourselves to prayer; think not of your bodies, for our God has care of each one among you."

Cardinal Ugolini came from Perugia to preside at this "Chapter," as it was called, "of the Sons of Francis." On the feast of Pentecost he celebrated a pontificial mass for them, and in the evening visited their tents. When he had made the round of all their encampments he said to Francis, his eyes swimming in tears: "O, Brother Francis, truly, this is the camp of the Lord." So great was the devotion inspired by the sight, that counts, barons, knights and gentlemen, cardinals, bishops, priests, with all ranks and degrees of citizens, made haste to witness this wonder; for never had they seen so many holy people in one place. And not only did they come to see this wonderful assembly, but they took care to bring everything which could be needed by such a multitude; as if our Lord would keep his word to them when he said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." Nor was it the number alone which astonished all thinking people, but the order, the tranquillity which reigned among them; so that many besides Lorenzo said: "Francis, who seemed likely to be the shame of Assisi has become its glory."

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The story of this chapter of the brothers of Francis spread from Assisi over the Christian world. Wherever they had a monastery, postulants came in so rapidly that it was hard to make room for them. These postulants were not expected to bring fortunes with them. If they had fortunes, the first act was to sell all they possessed for the poor. The high, the low, the learned and the unlearned, flocked to this standard of the cross displayed by Francis. There seemed, indeed, some special attraction about Francis for the noble and opulent. So great was the desire felt to enter his order, or, in some way, to share its singular merits, by persons who could not break away from their domestic or social duties, or from their responsibilities as kings and rulers, that Francis instituted a "Third Order," which allowed its members to live in the world and in their families, and still to share in the merits of all the self-denial, holy poverty and penance, practiced by any of the sons of Francis. It was in this way that Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Saint Louis of France, Christopher Columbus, Dante, and so many others, crowned as kings or queens or as benefactors of the whole human race, are still named as followers of Francis of Assisi. Among the learned men who took the habit of the Friars Minor or *Little Brothers*, as Francis called his followers, was one whose name in the world seems to have been forgotten, because he was known in the world as "The King of Song." The poet's crown had even been awarded to him by Frederic II., woven from the leaves of that laurel still to be found in the Colonna Gardens in Rome, distinguished from all others by the fragrance of its leaf, and still called the "Poet's Laurel," and which we see in pictures crowning the heads of Dante, Petrarch, and Tasso. For this king of song there no longer remained anything to be desired as to riches or honor; when, one day he went into a church in the quarter of San Severino, where Francis was preaching. Lost in the crowd, he considered at his leisure this mendicant friar, whose

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folly he had heard denounced, but whose eloquence charmed him. Suddenly he saw two shining swords crossed in the air over the head of Francis, and these seemed to transfix his body, one from the head to the feet, the other reaching from one outstretched hand to the other. At the same time, his own heart was pierced by the word of God coming from the lips of this man in the garb of a beggar. Without delay, he threw himself at the feet of Francis, cast behind his back all the allurements of the world, the pomps of the age, to take the habit of a friar. Francis gave him the name of Brother Pacific; "because," as he said, "he had turned from the disquietudes of the world to the peace of Christ." When Francis was a gay youth in Assisi, he had sung his own songs to his own airs, while borne on the shoulders of his comrades to and from their feasts. Afterwards, when his heart had been pierced by the arrow of divine love, he had chanted, among the groves in the suburbs of Assisi and along the highways, canticles full of holy tenderness and of poetic inspiration. Never did he open his mouth to instruct his brethren, to call sinners to penance, but some poetic image came from his lips. We have still his poem in praise of Poverty, his "Lady Poverty," as he loved to call her; and whose beauties and graces he sang just as the troubadours of his age sang the beauties and charms of some lady whom they admired. Then, too, his canticle to the "Sun," whom he calls "his brother;" and song seemed the natural language of his heart. Music, too, had ever been his delight; and when he longed to hear the divine praises sung as they deserved, angels came down to him and sang the psalms of the day. When, therefore, Brother Pacific took the habit of the Friars Minor, he was not required to forget his art as a poet. Brother Francis often asked Brother Pacific to put his irregular canticles into good verse, while Brother Pacific himself received inspirations under his habit and cowl, which have lived to our own day, while those for which he was crowned with laurel have died from the memory

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of mankind. Visions of heavenly joy came to Brother Pacific; and one day he saw the heavens open and in the midst of angels and archangels on their thrones, he saw one throne empty; and he heard a voice, which said: "This was the throne of a fallen angel; it has been kept for the poor little man of Assisi." Among the brothers was one named Humble, as this other had been named Pacific; and these two were very dear to each other, both being very holy and simple in their lives. In the course of years they were separated, and one day, being alone in prayer, Brother Pacific saw the soul of Brother Humble going up to heaven in great beauty. Afterwards came the tidings of his death. In the course of time, Brother Pacific was sent to live in the same monastery where Brother Humble had died. While there, some lord, to whom the land belonged, required the brothers to move. Among other treasures, they carried with them the bones of their dead brothers in religion. When they came to the tomb of Brother Humble, Brother Pacific took the white bones, bathed them in precious wine, while he wept over them and kissed them many times. The other brothers were astonished at this and blamed Brother Pacific, in their hearts, for having had too special a love for Brother Humble, while there were others who had lived as saintly lives and were as worthy of veneration. Brother Pacific knew the thoughts of his brothers and very humbly told them how he had seen, in a vision, the soul of Brother Humble going straight to heaven, adding, "had I seen this of any other brother, I would have honored him as much as I now do Brother Humble;" at which the other brothers were greatly rejoiced, and praised God.

While Francis seemed to have turned from all the pleasures and the possessions of this world, it was found that he had not turned from them, so much as he had given to God everything in them which was good and innocent. Thus poetry and music, which had served to increase the pleasures of the world, were

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used to increase the delight of the soul in the service of God. The tenderness and the delicacy which had been spent upon some song in honor of perishing beauty, had been used to set forth the claims of Lady Poverty, to the admiration of the world; and we are told, in a way which once read we can never forget, how this Lady Poverty received our Lord Jesus Christ in the stable of Bethlehem, went with him through his whole life; taking care that even his cross should be roughly hewn, and the nails few and coarse on which hung the weight of his sacred body; that he should be denied even water for his thirst and should have a winding-sheet and sepulchre given to him as to a poor man. At the same time that Francis restores to God his rights over the lyre of poetry, he shows how the innocence of Paradise makes the flowers of the field, and the beasts of the forest, and the birds of the air, our friends; just as they were the friends of Adam and of Eve, in the garden of Eden. The grace of wild flowers, their delicate hues and perfumes, all spoke to him of the mystical flower which sprang from the root of Jesse, or of that Immaculate Virgin who was, among all the other daughters of Eve, as a lily among thorns. He would spend hours in extolling the industry of the bee, the diligence of the ant, the gentleness of the dove. But above all, the bleating of the little lambs always reminded him of Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain for sinners, and he would rescue them, at any price, from the hand of the butcher. But not only did Brother Francis love animals of all sorts; these animals loved Brother Francis. No sooner did this emaciated figure of Francis, so worn with watching and fasts that it had lost all the beauty of its youth to the eyes of his fellowmen, issue from his cell, and go forth among the fields and groves of Umbria, than the animals seemed to see in him something divine; and flocking around him would hide in the folds of his habit. The timid fawn would come from its hiding place to lay its head under the hand of Francis; the stork, from its nest beyond

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the reach of man, to take a caress from his wasted palm; even the hare and the quail and the lizard of the hedges would find ways to express their love for him. One day, on his way to Spoleto, he passed a place where were a great number of birds, sparrows, rooks or crows, and doves. Out of love for the creatures of God, he ran towards them, leaving his companions behind him. He saw, as he came near to them, that the birds were expecting him, and he saluted them as his custom was. Delighted to find they were not frightened by his presence, he said to them: "My brothers the little birds, you ought to praise your Creator and to love him in a very singular manner; for he has clothed you with feathers, given you wings by which you can dwell in the purest regions of air. You neither sow nor reap, and he allows you to live without labor or care of any sort." At these words, as both Francis and his companions related, the birds, straightening themselves up according to their way, began to beat their wings with delight; and allowed Francis to go to and fro among them and to touch them with his robe without giving any sign of fear, but rather of pleasure. Finally he blessed them, making over them the sign of the cross and telling them they could fly away. "Ah," said he, to his companions, "why have I never before preached to the little birds, since they listen with so much respect?"

But in one way all of us are personal debtors to this man of most simple heart, of heavenly wisdom. Writing, as we do, in the last days of Advent, the purple of its vestments giving a tender pensivenes to the sanctuary, and the drifting snows covering cities as well as plains and forests with a Christmas garment of purity and of praise, while the biting cold and frosty air remind us of Bethlehem and its stable, we cannot pass over a charming act in the life of Francis of Assisi. During the last days of one of those Advents which he passed in such deprivation of every comfort, his whole soul fixed in contemplation upon the mystery

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of the Incarnation, dwelling with the tenderest affection and the tenderest sympathy upon all the circumstances of our Lord's birth, he felt a most extraordinary desire to make all these circumstances real to the eyes of his spiritual sons, and the way to do this came to him like an inspiration. He would have a crib—no crib of polished wood, but of rough planks like that from which the ox and the ass had eaten their hay the very evening when Mary and Joseph came to the cave and stable of Bethlehem for shelter. Beside this crib, should kneel these same privileged animals, adoring, in their humble way, with the Virgin Mother and Saint Joseph, the Divine Infant in their own manger. Everything should betoken the poverty of the God-man; everything should speak to the human heart of the loving sacrifices made by that "Word" who "was made flesh" in order to dwell among us. Having completed this most humble representation of an ineffable mystery, Francis served as deacon at the midnight mass of the monastery, and then preached to the people with a fervor surpassing himself, on the grandeur and the omnipotence of that babe in swaddling clothes, laid, by a virgin mother, in the manger of Bethlehem. This representation, in which there was nothing but poverty, touched a chord in the human heart which has never since failed to respond to the call of the Infant of Bethlehem. The next year saw a crib in every convent of his order, and from the Franciscans, or Friars Minor, as he called them, the custom has spread all over the Catholic world. There is not a monastery or convent which does not give, at Christmas, some representation of the stable of Bethlehem and its manger-crib; and there are few churches, from the Franciscan Church of Ara Cœli, close beside the Capitol of Rome, to the churches of America even on her western prairies, in which there is not some attempt to set forth to the devout soul the story of the Nativity as told by Saint Luke. In many convents and churches, this first scene is succeeded by a representa-

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tion of the visit of the three kings or the Adoration of the Magi; which is given with great magnificence in the church of *Sant' Andrea Della Valle* in Rome, for the feast of the Epiphany and its octave; this octave extending through eight days, including the feast itself.

But if Francis made haste, with the angels and the shepherds, to adore his Lord under the form of a babe in a manger, he was no less ready to accompany his Lord to Calvary. Towards the last of his life he wept almost continually. Wept with his Savior over that Jerusalem, which is a name for all mankind; that Jerusalem which crucified its Messiah after waiting for him four thousand years! Francis knew that if Jesus had come even in his own generation, he would have been crucified all the same. He knew, too, that men were still crucifying Jesus by their sins; and he wept for this continual crucifixion of his dearest Lord, and for the sinners who were continually crucifying him. His tears were as continual as this crucifixion. All the beauty of his face had long since disappeared, and instead of the youth, radiant with innocent joy, or even the penitent in his worn habit, or the friar in his own poor tunic addressing the birds or the people on a Christmas night, with a countenance thin but ecstatic, they saw a little man bent almost double, tears streaming down his worn cheeks and his eyes blinded with perpetual weeping. He had become, like his divine Master, "a worm and no man," and "there was no comeliness in him." There were some, even in his own order, who were fretted by these continued tears and who, in their hearts, despised this man whose work on earth seemed to have been accomplished. It was at this very lowest point of human humiliation, that God set his everlasting seal on the poor little man of Assissi, and that the Crucified One claimed him for his own.

By this time, there were plenty of wise friars minor to attend to the affairs of the order: plenty of scholars, and many who

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could preach to the people, and could instruct them. Francis was not needed for any of these things and he spent his days and nights in meditation and prayer. His favorite retreats were solitary places among the mountains; and of all these, the one most especially dear to the soul of Francis was that on Mount Alverno, a part of the Apennine range not far from the famous monastery of the Camaldoli, and that *Vallis-Umbrosa*, known to us as Vallombrosa. In the year 1224, in August, towards the feast of the Assumption, Francis retired to the most secret place on this Mount Alverno, taking with him some companions who made him a little cell among the rocks and pines. When the little cell was done, Francis was so entirely pleased with it that he sent every one away but Brother Leo, and gave strict orders that no other person should come to him before the feast of Saint Michael, the 29th of September. He told Brother Leo to bring him a little bread and water every evening and lay it at the door of his cell, adding: "When you come to matins, do not come in; only say: *Domine labia mea aperies* (Lord thou shalt open my lips). If I shall answer *Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam* (and my mouth shall show forth thy praise), you are to come in; otherwise you are to go away again."* Brother Leo was at the door of the little cell punctually every morning, but very often he was obliged to go away again without hearing the *Et os meum*, in reply to his *Domine labia*. Once when he got no answer, he saw Francis lying prostrate on the ground, surrounded by a bright light, while he repeated, again and again, "Who art thou, O my God, and my most sweet Lord? And who am I, a base worm and thy unworthy servant?" But there were to be other proofs of the heavenly favors granted to Francis in his retreat on Mount Alverno, than the word of our poor, and, as the world would say, "credulous" monk.

*These words, from the 50th Psalm, open the Office at Matins and Lauds, recited daily by every priest and by all religious communities, monks or nuns.

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On the 15th of September, or the day after the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, when the Church dwells upon the beauty, and the excellence, and the power of the cross of Christ, Francis, being still in his retreat and altogether absorbed in prayer, was raised from the ground by the joy of his ecstatic contemplation, and his whole soul had melted within him by reason of his compassion for his Savior, when he saw a seraph, rosy with the love of God, flying towards him with the swiftness of light. This seraph had six wings, like six bright flames, and stood still in the air before Francis. And as he thus stood in the air, Francis saw the figure of Jesus Christ crucified between these flaming wings, and his soul was inundated with an inexpressible joy mingled with a pain equally impossible to be put into words. For, while it was a sweet privilege to look upon this face of Jesus under the form of a seraph, before he was called to meet it in judgment, Francis was ready to die of grief at seeing his Lord crucified. And as Francis contemplated this vision, its real meaning came to him; for he understood that as the ethereal, impassible body of the seraph was pierced by the same wounds as those of Jesus Christ, so his soul was to be pierced with the loving sorrow of Jesus for sin, and for sinners. But now began a mysterious proof, to the eyes of all, of what was going on in the soul of Francis; for while he continued rapt in meditation even after the vision had disappeared, a pain, unlike any he had ever felt, darted through his hands, his feet, his side. Then, too, the blood not only started from these five wounds suddenly opening in his flesh, but in his hands and feet appeared protuberances, like the heads of those large, coarse nails which were used in crucifying our Lord, and one of which is still to be seen in the church of the Holy Cross in Rome; and not only did the heads of these nails appear, but their points, curved and blunt, were to be seen on the soles of his feet, so that it was almost impossible for him to walk, and also on the back of his hands, so thin and

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so worn with fasts and with hardships; while the wound in his side was open and livid and shed drops of blood like tears. Francis was transported with the blissful pain of these wounds by which he became an image of his crucified Lord. But when the time came to appear among his brethren, his humility was alarmed by the necessity of allowing the greatness of God's favors to him to be seen by men. With the greatest difficulty Brother Leo succeeded in helping him to walk on his feet, pierced by these mystical nails, to the monastery at Assisi. When there, he felt compelled, by the spirit of holy obedience, to show these wounds to the superiors whom he had caused to be appointed over himself; begging them, however, to allow him to conceal them from the brothers. For this purpose he wore the feet of old stockings, and constantly carried his hands in the sleeves of his habit. From this time, also, we see Francis retiring, altogether, from the affairs of his order; for if any one could say, with Saint Paul: *Henceforth let no man be troublesome to me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*, it was Francis of Assisi. His days and nights were spent in the prayer of ecstacy, for he no longer lived like others or prayed like others on earth; but rather like the blessed in heaven; save this, that in heaven there is no weeping; while Francis never ceased to weep for his own sins, the sins of his sons and brothers in religion and the sins of the whole world. Two years were thus spent, during which he was a marvel and a mystery even to his own brothers, the friars minor. The mortal pains which he suffered from all sorts of weakness, made it necessary for Francis to be under the care of the best physicians; who were ordered to attend upon him, both by Cardinal Ugolini, the protector of the order, and by the vicar-general, Brother Elias. When these pains were so great that one of the brothers begged him to ask God to lessen them, he arose from his bed, fell on his knees, saying: "O Lord, I return thee thanks for the pains which I suffer: and beg thee to add to them

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a hundred more, if such be thy holy will." He foretold his death long before it happened to his brethren; and also on Sunday, the 28th of September, in a letter which he dictated to a pious lady in Rome. A little before his death, he gave his last instructions to his brothers, exhorting them to love their rule of holy poverty, working with their hands. "If you receive nothing for your work, have recourse to the table and the treasury of the Lord, begging alms from door to door." As a special favor, he asked to be buried on a hill outside the walls of Assisi, where criminals were executed, like another Golgotha or Calvary; and which was called *Colle d' Inferno*, or Hill of Hell. Having made these requests, he insisted upon being laid on the ground, and covered with an old habit. He then gave his last blessing to his order and to all his disciples, those absent as well as those present, and asked them to sing that canticle of thanksgiving from all God's creatures which he had composed, and called "The Canticle of the Sun." When this had been sung, he asked to have read to him the Passion of our Lord, as written by Saint John. After this, he began to recite the one hundred and forty-first psalm: *I cried with my voice to the Lord.* Having repeated the last verse, *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name*, he yielded up his seraphic soul to God; it being the 4th of October, 1226, the twentieth year after his consecration to God, and the forty-fifth of his age.

No sooner was this "poor little man of Assisi" dead, than Assisi and the whole Christian world felt free to declare its veneration for him. The mysterious wounds of the passion, which he had concealed so carefully while living that only a few of his own order had seen them, were now shown openly to the whole world. Crowds flocked to the monastery to see them, to kiss them with reverence; while the most incredulous were not prevented from touching these wounds and examining them. He was buried, as he had desired, on the *Colle d' Inferno;* but Pope

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Gregory IX., commanded it to be called thenceforth, *Colle del Paradiso*, or Hill of Paradise. This pope, formerly Cardinal Ugolini, who succeeded Pope Honorius III., in 1227, went to Assisi two years after the death of Francis. After the most careful and even severe examination of all the circumstances of the life and death of Francis, he performed the ceremony by which Francis of Assisi was declared to be a saint, on the 16th of July, 1228. This pope gave a sum of money for beginning a church over the spot where Saint Francis was buried. From this time no honors were too great to be paid to the humble monk of Assisi. No sooner was it known that a church was to be built over his body, pierced with such mysterious wounds, than the most renowned artists in Christendom, the artists of Siena, Florence, Pisa, Rome, hastened to immortalize themselves by leaving a picture or a whole series of pictures on its walls. Cimabue, a Florentine noble as well as an illustrious painter; Giotto, a shepherd boy and the son of a shepherd, who was found, by the courtly Cimabue, drawing a picture of his flock on the smooth slate stone of the pasture on one of the hills of Tuscany, and became greater, even, than his noble teacher; Pietro Cavallini, the pious artist of Rome who stands at the head of a long list who followed him in his art but not always in his devotion; Giovanni Spagna, too, the mystical painter of the Nativity with the angels, the shepherds and the magi, with so many others that we cannot try to name them as they deserve; all these left precious pictures in the church begun by Pope Gregory IX. And strange to say, these pictures always excelled any before painted by these artists. A wonderful inspiration excited them whenever they painted near the tomb of Saint Francis; and they represented him, no longer as the "poor little man of Assisi," but in a glorified spiritual body, clothed in beautiful dalmatics as a deacon and sitting as seen by Brother Pacific, on one of the thrones left vacant by a fallen angel. In fact, a revival of art dates from the

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death and canonization of Saint Francis; so that we may say, that the most beautiful period of Christian art, when it put forth its loveliest blossoms, produced its most wonderful fruits, began, not with a magnificent prince, not with any time of extraordinary wealth when people had more money than they knew how to use and each one was trying to outdo his neighbor in grandeur; but with a man who loved and practiced poverty, and who required the practice of it from all his disciples. How strange all this looks, when everybody in America is saying: "Oh, wait until we are rich, and then we will have nice pictures!" There is something in this for people to study over.

We have spoken of Brother Pacific, that king of song, who became a friar minor just when the world looked brightest to him. There was another little disciple of Saint Francis, only five years old when the saint died, who became a great priest, a great theologian and doctor of the Church, as well as a poet. This was Saint Bonaventura, and it all came about in this way. The little boy had been christened John. When he was about four years old he was very ill; so ill that his life was despaired of. His mother, seeing that no doctors could save her child, hastened to Assisi and begged Francis, whose hands and feet and side bore the mystical marks of his love for Jesus, to beg this Jesus to spare her son to her. Francis was touched to the soul by her grief, and he prayed that her son might live. He did live, and Francis, seeing in a vision what this child would prove to be, cried out, *O buona ventura!* or "happy event!" And this name, *Bonaventura*, was given to the child.

Another disciple of Saint Francis was the Blessed Egidius, that man who declared so miraculously the triple purity of Mary: "A virgin immaculate in the moment of her conception; a virgin immaculate when she conceived the Son of God in her womb; and a virgin immaculate when she brought him forth in the stable of Bethlehem;" and at each of these sentences, as he struck the

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ground with his staff, a lily sprang forth, to attest to its verity. It was this same Blessed Egidius who said: "It is better to bear one grave injury without the least murmur, for the love of God, than to feed a hundred poor men every day, or to fast many days until evening." This sentence from the lips of a companion of Saint Francis of Assisi, comes down to us, of to-day, after having been spoken six hundred years, on a pretty Christmas card beside the "arms of Saint Francis," and the symbols of the Passion, and the roses from that bush into which the Saint of Assisi threw himself, rolling on the thorns in order to conquer a rebellious passion. It is thus that the value of small things, of a few words fitly spoken, are proved in the course of centuries.

Brother Giles, the third companion of Saint Francis, was not a learned man like Saint Bonaventura, nor was he a poet like Brother Pacific. Still, the fame of his sanctity came to the ears of the holy French king, Saint Louis; that king, who wore, under his royal robes, the habit and cord of Francis, the Seraph of Assisi. This holy king, who was making a pious pilgrimage to the shrines of Italy, hearing that Brother Giles was at Perugia, resolved to visit him; not as a king with his retinue, but as a pilgrim. As such, he knocked at the gate of the poor convent of the Franciscans at Perugia, and asked for Brother Giles, without giving his own name. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit had apprized the humble brother who was to visit him. Without a moment's delay he met his pilgrim visitor in the court, and both kneeling, out of respect, to each other, tenderly embraced; and thus they remained, speaking no word, until the visitor rose to depart. When he had gone, the brother who opened the gate said: "Who has visited you, Brother Giles?" and the humble Giles answered: "Louis of France." Which he had no sooner said, than all exclaimed: "And you suffered the king of France to leave us without speaking one word to him or offering him hospitality." "My dear brothers," returned Giles, "do not be

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astonished. So soon as we embraced, the light of divine science manifested me to his heart and him to mine. Be assured that the king is perfectly contented with me and his soul is comforted." Such is the story which comes not only from Brother Giles, but from the biographers of Louis of France.

But among all the Franciscans we must not forget *Fra Jacopone* of Todi. We cannot give the wonderful story of his life; can only say, that in 1268, when his beautiful young wife was suddenly torn from him by death, and he saw under her festive garments the hair shirt of a penitent, Jacopone was a penitent also; and, still a poet It is to Fra Jacopone, the Franciscan, that we owe that hymn to the Blessed Virgin which so pierces the heart through and through, whether sung to the Gregorian chant to which it has been set for centuries, or to the dramatic notes of Rossini, or simply recited by some priestly voice, or even read to ourselves in the silence of our own hearts; for, to Fra Jacopone, we owe that almost divine song, the Stabat Mater! Painting, poetry, music, theology as well as seraphic piety, all taking a heavenward flight from the shrine of that lover of holy poverty, Francis of Assisi!

We have spoken of the "Arms of Saint Francis of Assisi." As the houses of princes, of nobles, of gentlemen, ecclesiastics or laymen, have their armorial bearings, so have the world-wide family of Saint Francis; and it is to be seen over the door of every Franciscan convent, monastery or church on the European continent, viz., two arms crossed, one naked, the other in a sleeve, both hands pierced by the nail of the crucified; and between these rises the cross of Calvary. The story is this: After Saint Francis had embraced his life of poverty, and was clad with one garment only, our Lord appeared to him, saying: "After all, Francis, you are not so poor as your master." "How is this?" said the meek follower of him who had been born in a

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stable. "You," replied the Savior, "have your arms covered with a tunic, while for you I hung naked on the cross."

Not only the church at Assisi, and the Franciscan church of Santa Croce at Florence, tell the story of Saint Francis in a way to draw pilgrims from every part of the world, but there is scarcely a chapel in Europe which does not keep one or another of the beautiful victories of this seraph of divine love in remembrance. The simple and the learned wear the habit of the third order; many more the simple "Cord of Saint Francis," and each and every one of these is not only a disciple of Saint Francis, but of him who said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

The Church keeps two festivals in honor of Saint Francis; one on the 4th of October, to honor his death; the other on the 17th of September, to honor the stigmas which he received, as a mark of our Lord's special regard for one who so honored his own passion.



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SAINT THECLA.

WHY do you still sit at the window, my daughter? You were there all last evening, and now you have taken the same place as if for the day. I cannot imagine the charm about this particular window over all others in the house, Thecla!" And the mother's voice grew impatient.

"If you had only listened, as I begged you to do last night, mother, you would not wonder at my choosing to sit by this window."

"But there is nothing to listen to now, Thecla."

"No, mother, not just at this moment; but he told his audience, last night, that he should speak to them again in the morning."

"And who is this wonderful orator who has so captivated your fancy, my daughter?" said Theoclea.

"Indeed I do not know, mother; I have not seen his face; I have only heard his voice as it comes from the house of Onesipherus. And yet it is not his voice, nor his oratory, which has won me, but the wonderful words which drop from his lips. A new world has been opened to me—a world so unlike the one we live in, that it seems like a dream. But he says it is all a reality."

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"Since I have not listened to this unseen stranger, repeat his discourse to me, for you have a good memory."

"He has been telling them of a kingdom which is ruled, not by a mere man, but by the Son of God, who is God and yet man. This king, who came down from heaven, lived in poverty and died on a cross. But here comes the most wonderful part of this story, which he says is a true history: for this king, who died on a cross, came to life again on the third day and then ascended above the heavens to sit again on his throne in glory."

"My dear Thecla, one would think there were gods and goddesses enough in Olympus for you to hear and read about, instead of spending your time listening to this stranger, who may be anything than what he pretends to be."

"Oh, mother, do not speak in this way! This king, who is God, and yet man, does not allow us to pay respect to the gods and goddesses of Olympus. And this stranger quotes from our own poets, and tells us how we have been groping, all our lives, for the unknown God, who is the Father and Creator of all men, and who will one day judge us."

"Then I am quite certain, Thecla, that you should not listen to him any longer. What right has he to speak thus of the gods of your country, and what right have you to listen to him?"

"Indeed I cannot tell you, my dear mother; but there is something in the very tones of his voice, so clear and so earnest, which makes me feel sure that he has a right to speak as he does and that it is right for me to listen to him."

"I very much fear, my daughter, that this neighbor of ours, Onesipherus, is a Christian. This has been hinted to your father more than once; no doubt you have been listening to one of those dangerous teachers who are going about Asia Minor, preaching against the gods of Greece."

"Now, mother, I begin to understand what he said last night.

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The name of this wonderful king is Jesus Christ, and he addressed his hearers as Christians!"

"Then, my dear Thecla, the sooner you leave the window the better; and let us close it, that no word of this wicked discourse may reach our ears."

"Oh, my own mother, how can you refuse to hear the wonderful words which have been brought to us by this stranger? Listen to him but this once, and you will say that you could listen to him forever!"

"Thecla, you are bewitched! I am ashamed of you! What would Thamyris, your betrothed, say, if he should see you sitting at this window and devouring the words of a stranger?"

"If he would but listen for a few minutes, he would sit beside me and devour his words as I do." And Thecla turned quickly again towards the window, for she heard the voice of the strange teacher, whom she now believed to be a Christian teacher. "And I, too," she said in her heart, "am a Christian."

Theoclea looked at her daughter for a moment, hoping to break in upon the discourse of the preacher in the next house; but she saw Thecla perfectly absorbed. A feeling more like sadness than anger came over the mother. She would not listen herself; no! no! but she would send for Thamyris; he might be able to break the charm of the unseen teacher. A messenger was despatched for Thamyris, therefore; but instead of waiting for his arrival we will look into the house of Onesipherus, and then learn from his lips about the teacher.

It was in the year 45 of the Christian era, or only twelve years after the death of our Redeemer on Mount Calvary. On the morning of the very day on which Thecla heard for the first time, from an open window in her father's house, the tones of that persuasive voice, it was whispered about among the Christians of Iconium that Paul, the apostle and doctor of the Gentiles, had come from Antioch. Great was the joy of all the

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Christians; but to no one did the tidings give such happiness as to Onesipherus. Without a moment's delay, he presented himself at the door of the modest house where Paul had taken lodgings, and was ushered into a room where he saw several strangers. He did not ask for the great Christian teacher; but going directly up to a man of small stature, with a nose slightly arched, a beautifully shaped head, and a countenance that would be called angelic, Onesipherus saluted him with the deepest humility, as the apostle of Jesus Christ. The right hand of the stranger was raised for a moment over the bowed head of Onesipherus, making over it the sign of the cross, and Onesipherus rose from his knees. Onesipherus was a man of influence in Iconium and his position was strengthened by great wealth. In a few moments he had been presented to all the strangers. Damas and Alexander had come with the apostle from Antioch. Damas said, laughingly, to Onesipherus: "Why did you not take one of us for the apostle? We are taller than he is."

"Pardon me, good Damas and Alexander," replied Onesipherus, "if I say that there is something majestic about that small figure and that refined, scholarly head, which could belong to no other than Paul the apostle. I should have recognized him even if I had not remembered the description given to me by his disciple Titus. There is a look, too, on that face, which must have come from the vision on the way to Damascus; from that other vision, also, when he was caught up to the third heaven and heard words not given to man to utter."

But Onesipherus was not contented to see and hear the apostle in public. "Let me claim you as my guest," he said to Saint Paul. "In my house you can preach to the Christians of Iconium at all hours. The house is your own." The apostle had only to look once at the earnest face of Onesipherus, to be convinced of his sincerity and of his devotion to the cause of Christ. "As you will, my son," he replied. And so it was ar-

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ranged that he should preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to the Christians of Iconium in the house of Onesipherus. This house stood next to the house of Theoclea; and the voice and the teaching that had won the ear and the heart of the young girl, Thecla, was no other than the voice and the teaching of Saint Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. The messenger sent by Theoclea to Thamyris returned, and with him came Thamyris himself. For the first time Thecla was indifferent to his presence. The apostle was in the midst of one of his most earnest appeals to the minds and hearts of his hearers. Having already explained to them the true doctrines of Christ, he spoke of the persecutions to which they were always liable. Then, as if to rouse their courage under danger, he exclaimed: "But I esteem all things to be lost for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have left all things, and look upon them only as dirt, that so I may gain Christ." At this moment Thamyris entered the room. Without rising, Thecla exclaimed: "Oh, Thamyris, come to the window and hear the great teacher."

"I have come to see you, Thecla; not to listen to any strange teacher, however great."

"Listen to him, if only for a moment!" urged Thecla. But when Thamyris again refused, she turned her face to the window, as perfectly absorbed as before. In vain did Thamyris, like her mother, try to win her attention. Since they would not listen with her, she sat by herself until the voice ceased. Then, with a sigh, she left the window until she again heard it, when she again returned to her seat. Great was the consternation of Thamyris, as well as of Theoclea. To be a Christian, or to be known and reported as one, was to incur the contempt of one's own family and the penalties of the law. Theoclea, much as she was displeased with Thecla, was still more disturbed by the fear of the disgrace it would bring upon her daughter. She had sent for Thamyris, hoping that his influence would remove the

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impression made by the eloquence of the unknown teacher; but she found, instead, that Thamyris was angry at the slight given him by Thecla; and she feared their marriage contract would be broken off. Finding that his entreaties had no effect upon Thecla, Thamyris turned directly away from her, and left the house in a fit of rage and of jealousy. "My revenge shall be swift and sure," he muttered, as he made his way to the prefect of the city. His first complaint was against a teacher who scorned the gods of the country, and harangued his disciples in the house of Onesipherus. The second complaint was against Thecla, his betrothed, for having listened to this teacher, and for having declared herself a Christian.

It was no surprise to Saint Paul when he found himself suddenly stopped in his discourse, and led before the tribunal of the prefect. Neither was he surprised to hear himself accused of leading astray the young people of Iconium, and therefore condemned to be beaten with rods and banished from the city. The commotion caused by the arrest of Saint Paul in the house of Onesipherus, was heard by Thecla as she sat by her window; but before she had recovered from the shock, the officers entered the house of Theoclea, and demanded Thecla in the name of the prefect. Instead of being overcome by terror, an heroic joy suddenly took possession of this young girl. So far from trying to escape, she delivered herself freely to the hands of the officers. It was enough for her to know that she was seized as a Christian. What, then, was her joy when she stood with the great teacher himself, before the prefect of Iconium! When she saw, for the first time, her unknown instructor in the truth of Christ, it seemed too great a happiness to be true. As the trial went on, Thamyris appeared as a witness against his betrothed; but his cruelty seemed to have no effect upon her. She was as indifferent to his malice as she was to his presence. When the sentence was given out from the tribunal that "Paul, the teacher, was to be

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beaten with rods like a slave, and Thecla, the young girl, was to be burned as a Christian," she seemed to see the new heaven, of which she had just learned, opening before her. As she was led past the apostle, he raised his chained right hand and gave her his blessing, and she went forth to her martyrdom as to her bridal. But when this inhuman sentence was about to be executed, when the flames had been already kindled, and the face of the young Thecla was beaming with a supernatural joy, all at once the clouds of heaven opened and sent down a torrent of rain which extinguished the flames. Suddenly, too, the earth trembled, and the whole city was thrown into such consternation that the guards took no more notice of Thecla and she was left to go where she pleased. With a light step she turned towards her own home; but instead of going to the familiar gate, or asking the protection of those whose displeasure she had roused, she presented herself at the gate of Onesipherus, and asked for the apostle.

Great was the joy of the household; for Saint Paul had returned to them, under cover of the same storm which had protected Thecla; and here, too, was the young convert who had come so near to that martyrdom which would have been her baptism of blood! But who can put into words the joy of Thecla herself, who could now sit among the Christians of Iconium, listen to the teachings of Saint Paul, and learn the lesson of the saints!

But the hatred of Thamyris was not satisfied. Again the officers of the prefect were set, like blood-hounds, upon the track of the heroic virgin. Again she was brought before the tribunal and condemned to death; this time, not to a death by fire, but by the teeth of wild beasts. And again, too, the soul of Thecla rose to the glory of martyrdom. Led into the amphitheatre of her native city clothed only in her innocence and arming herself with the sign of the cross, she awaited the fatal

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spring of the lioness that had been uncaged at her side; but the lioness, forgetting its thirst for blood, crouched gently before the maiden, and licked her feet as if caressing them. "For shame! for shame!" exclaimed the women in the amphitheatre, "thus to expose one whom the very beasts salute with respect and gentleness!"

"Oh, unjust judgment!" cried one voice above all the others; "the whole city must suffer for such a sentence!" and Tressina, the woman whose voice was thus heard, wept aloud. But the prefect would not yield. "Uncage the lion!" he called out fiercely to the master of the games. "That lioness has the heart of a woman. The lion will show his teeth!" The crowd sat breathless as the king of the desert stood free on the sands of the arena. There was a joy in this liberty which seemed to satisfy him, starved as he was, for the moment; but no sooner did his eye turn upon the maiden, and light up with the fierceness of his savage hunger, than the lioness sprang upon him with a fury which forced him to defend himself. The struggle was short; and at its close, both the lion and the lioness lay dead on the sand. The hush which had reigned in the amphitheatre during this strange conflict was broken by shouts of applause, and a cry: "Free her! free the virgin Thecla!" The prefect dared not disregard this burst of popular feeling. Sending for the master of the games, he said in a low voice: "Give the young girl her raiment: but tell her to leave the city without delay."

Released at the demand of the citizens of Iconium, Thecla gladly availed herself of the permission to leave it. There was but one city towards which her young feet would turn, and that was Antioch. Thither she sped, with her two bright crowns of martyrdom lighting up her unconscious brow. The world had severed all its ties for her; she had not been obliged to cut one herself; and yet she was free to espouse him who is not only the *Strength of Martyrs*, but the *Purity of Virgins* and the *Crown*

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of all his Saints. Thenceforth there were journeyings and persecutions, and trials of her holy courage and fortitude. But the Christian heroine of the first half of the first Christian century never faltered. Saint Peter, the first pope, in whom centred the authority of the infant Church, and who seemed so necessary to its existence, had died on the cross, with his head downward; Saint Paul, too, her beloved teacher and father in Christ, had been beheaded; and Thecla, more than once, had bathed her forehead in the waters of the *Three fountains* which sprang up where his head touched, three times, the ground of Rome, leaving his blood as the seed of the Church of Christ. And still Thecla lived on. When the fury of persecution had died out in Iconium and when she, too, was old, she returned to her native city; not, however, to the beautiful patrician home she had left, and of which she had been the pride and ornament, but to a cave on the side of that lofty range of mountains in Asia Minor, called *Taurus.* Here the aged Christian virgin, Thecla, lived a life of meditation and of prayer. Among the very old citizens, there were those who remembered to have heard, in their childhood, of a beautiful girl named Thecla, of a noble house and learned in the poetry and philosophy of Greece, who had embraced the new religion and who suffered as a Christian, both at the stake and in the amphitheatre. There was the tradition too, among them, of the miraculous shower from heaven which extinguished the flames, and of the lioness that licked the feet of the young virgin, and killed the lion about to spring upon her. The little children of the region looked, with awe, towards the mountains where they were told she still lived, in a cave, this virgin and martyr. To the mouth of this cave were brought the sick of the province, to be healed by Saint Thecla, and thus it was that she was ninety years old before our Lord called her to himself in heavenly glory.

Her feast is celebrated on the 23d of September. Saint Thecla, virgin and martyr, pray for us!

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SAINT DENIS;

OR,

SAINT DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE.

ON the first Good Friday, there was darkness over the whole earth from the sixth to the ninth hour; that is, from the time that Jesus Christ was raised up before all the people of Jerusalem, hanging upon the cross, until he cried, with a loud voice, *It is finished!* and until his lifeless body shone out white into the darkness. Then the terrible eclipse was over. The birds came forth and chirped timidly and the sun rose bright in the heavens, for three hours before it set behind the hills around Jerusalem.

Over the beautiful city of Athens, in Greece, where they worshipped Apollo, the god of light, came this terrible darkness of three hours. Over the Egyptian Heliopolis, too, the City of the Sun, this darkness fell, just as it fell over Jerusalem itself. The Greek philosophers said that the God of nature was suffering, and that all nature sympathized with him. In no other way could they explain this terrible darkness which came on at midday.

Dionysius was a Greek philosopher, who lived in the most beautiful part of beautiful Athens, among the palaces and temples and fountains of the hill of Mars. On this hill was a temple

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to Mars, the god of war; and because *Ares* was one of the names given to Mars, the hill was called Areopagus. On this hill, too, was seated the highest court of Athens, and this court, also, was called the Areopagus; while the persons who were allowed to sit in this court, and try the cases which came before it, were called Areopagites. Our Dionysius was an Areopagite, and held in great honor in his native city. In those far-off ages the philosophers of Greece went to Egypt, just as Americans now go to Europe, to see the great cities, and the temples, and the libraries, and to converse with learned men. Our Dionysius was in Heliopolis when the sun was darkened for three hours. When he returned to Athens, intending to relate to them this wonderful fact, he found the grave Areopagites setting up an altar *To the Unknown God*, during whose three hours' agony the sun had been darkened.

Seventeen years after this, a man of slender stature, with a nose slightly arched, a beautifully shaped head, and eyes that seemed to read the hearts of all men, stood on the hill of Mars; stood on the steps of the noble portico where the court called Areopagus was held. The grave judges were all around him, chained to their places by the power of this wonderful voice, by the power of these wonderful eyes. Among them was one who seemed, as he listened, "to be thinking all over." Never once did he take his eyes from the great expounder of divine things; for the teacher was Saint Paul, and his listener was Dionysius, the Areopagite. But while Dionysius listened with his whole mind and soul, there were some who scoffed at the words of the great apostle, while others feared to believe him. Among these last was Apollophanes, a friend to Dionysius and his companion on his visit to Heliopolis, where both saw the sun darkened for three hours. Apollophanes stood leaning against one of the pillars of the grand portico, while Paul spoke. "What would this babbler of news have an Athenian philosopher believe?" he said

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to the one who stood next to him, in a low voice. "Oh!" said the other, lightly, "he only asks us to believe in a new god, or demon."

"No, no!" said Apollophanes, thoughtfully. "It is not in a new god, but in an old one, who will destroy and bring utterly to nought, those whom we have honored all our lives. Mars will soon be turned from his own temple, and our Areopagus itself will lose its authority. It is something more than a new god, believe me," continued Apollophanes. A moment after he had stepped forward, and almost confronted the apostle, saying, quite abruptly: "This is a new and most strange doctrine to the ears of the Athenians. We would know what it all means. This Christ, who is both God and man, is not content to share our worship with the gods of Olympus, he will have all for himself. Tell us, noble stranger, what is to be the end of this uncrowning of our ancient deities?"

There was no surprise, no displeasure, in the look of the apostle as he turned towards Apollophanes. He saw in him no scoffing opponent, but one blinded by prejudice and by his education. A glow of holy enthusiasm lighted up the face of Saint Paul; for a moment his eyes were raised to heaven, then they rested upon Apollophanes. "Ye men of Athens!" came from his lips, like a strain of clear music; "ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for passing by your temples, and seeing your idols, I found an altar, upon which was inscribed: 'To the unknown God.' Him, therefore, whom you worship without knowing, I now declare unto you."

"*The Unknown God!*" exclaimed Dionysius, rising suddenly to his feet. "Apollophanes, do you not remember the darkness of three hours which fell upon the whole earth, upon sunny Athens as well as upon Heliopolis? For when we returned to Athens we found this altar, of which the stranger has just spoken, already set up, and dedicated to the unknown God who had suf-

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fered so mysteriously that the whole creation suffered with him. It is all plain to me now!"

"Do not be in haste, good Dionysius," replied Apollophanes, "there is more in this than we can afford to accept lightly. It will cost its followers dear. Be careful not to commit yourself to this new doctrine." This was no sooner spoken openly, than disputations arose on all sides; in the midst of which the apostle passed silently, and unobserved by many, from the steps of the portico of the Areopagites. But Dionysius followed him, not only with his eyes and his heart, but with his feet. Coming up to him, he said: "It may cost me dear, as Apollophanes has said, but I am not one to see the truth and then to reject it. Tell me more, I pray you, noble stranger, about this same Jesus of Nazareth." They had passed the temple of Mars, and Dionysius urged Saint Paul to come to his own house and sup with him. As they walked they still conversed, Saint Paul opening to him the celestial treasures of the doctrine of Christ. A strong wish to believe with a strange inability to do so, bewildered and distressed Dionysius. At this moment a blind man met them, and Dionysius said to Saint Paul: "If you will say to this blind man in the name of thy God, '*See!*' and if he shall receive his sight, I can believe. But use no magical words, for perhaps you know of such. I will dictate the words. Say, then: 'In the name of Jesus Christ, who was born of a virgin, who was crucified, who died and rose again, and who afterwards ascended into heaven, I command thee to receive thy sight!'" Saint Paul replied: "Say those words thyself, my good Dionysius; you can then be sure that no magic has been used."

In a distinct but solemn voice, Dionysius pronounced the words. Hardly had the last one died from his tongue, when the darkened eyes of the blind man beamed with a new intelligence, and he fell at the feet of his benefactor to thank him for the blessing of sight. "Thou has done more for me," said Dionysius,

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with deep emotion, "than I have done for thee. To thee has been granted the gift of sight; to me, of faith!" And going forward quickly to his own splendid mansion, he said to Damaris, his wife: "Behold how noble a guest I bring to our house! no other than one who will teach thee all thou hast desired to know of The Unknown God!" Damaris, who was a woman of noble birth and of great accomplishments, received Saint Paul as a messenger from heaven. She was never weary of his instructions, and was ready to be baptized with Dionysius. For three years Dionysius listened to the teachings of Saint Paul to the Athenians. At the end of this time he had willingly resigned his seat in the Areopagus, and was consecrated Bishop of Athens. His fame for learning won the respect of the Athenians, and he converted great numbers to the faith, among whom was his friend Apollophanes. Besides teaching by word of mouth, Dionysius wrote many works concerning heavenly things, especially about the nine choirs of angels. It was said that Saint Paul had made known to his favorite disciple what he had seen in his vision, when he was lifted, in spirit, to the third heaven. After the martyrdom of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Saint Linus was pope of Rome, and after him Saint Cletus. In the year 91, Saint Clement became the head of the Christian Church. The learning and piety of the holy bishop of Athens was well known to Pope Clement, who, like Dionysius, was a convert under the teachings of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. He knew to whom he was writing, when he sent to Athens this word: "In Gaul we have greater need of thee than at Athens."

From sunny Athens, then, with its clear sky, pure atmosphere, and genial climate, Dionysius set forth without delay. He crossed the blue waters of the Mediterranean on his way to Rome; then took his route, by land and sea, to the north, where ancient Gaul, now called France, awaited the messenger of Christ. Paris, even then, was the principal city of Gaul; and in Paris, Dion-

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ysius, with his two faithful companions, Rusticus and Eleutherius, took up his abode. Great was the joy of the Gauls as they heard the words of peace and good will spoken by Dionysius and his companions. They saw them leading lives of meekness and labor; instead of the bloody rites of idolatry, they beheld the Holy Oblation of the mass; instead of anger and revenge, they saw charity and brotherly love. But all at once a storm gathered in the clear sky. This Jesus was not content to share the worship given to the other gods of the country. The Druids no longer found followers. They were left alone in their sacred woods, with their ancient oaks and their mistletoe. Full of jealousy and anger, shutting their eyes to the truth which deprived them of their power over the minds of their countrymen, they determined to be revenged upon Dionysius and his companions. This was not difficult. "How is it," said the emperor, Domitian, "that with all my edicts against the Christians, they flourish, not only in Rome, but in northern Gaul? Let us send a pro-consul who will know his duty, and do it. Fescennius, you hate these Christians bitterly enough, I am certain, to carry out the imperial edict."

"As you will, great emperor," obsequiously replied Fescennius; and without delay he was ordered to Gaul. No sooner had the new pro-consul arrived, than the Druids entered their complaints against Dionysius. "Destroy Dionysius," they said, "and his two companions, Rusticus and Eleutherius, and the new religion is overthrown." This was all that Fescennius needed to know. Without delay, Dionysius and his two assistants were brought before him, cruelly scourged and thrust into a dungeon; heavy fetters were fastened on their ankles, and manacles on their wrists, and they were deprived of all consolation, save the love of God in their hearts. The next day Dionysius was taken out of his prison, and led before the pro-consul. The hall of torture was in sight; and through the doors that stood wide open,

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in order to terrify the prisoners, he could see a bed of iron over red-hot coals. The pro-consul pointed towards this bed of fire, saying, in a mocking tone: "Once, proud Athenian, you knew somewhat of the luxuries of life. Choose between that couch of flames and the denial of your Christ." The worn face of the Christian bishop was turned towards heaven, and his reply was made to him who "sitteth above the heavens on his starry throne," rather than to the pro-consul: "Thy word, O my God, has taken fire, and thy servant loveth it!"

It was no pleasing task to the executioners themselves to carry out the order of the tyrant; but Dionysius, so far from yielding, preached Christ from his bed of flames. "Away with him," cried out Fescennius, "throw him to the wild beasts, since the fire despises him for its prey!" To the amphitheatre, then, was Dionysius hurried; a mad rabble at his back, and taunts and jeers the only words addressed to him. In less time than would seem possible, he was standing in the midst of the amphitheatre, with not one lion only, but several, let loose upon him and all roaring for their prey. Without a single quiver of his nerves, he calmly raised his consecrated right hand, made the sign of the cross over the roaring and snarling beasts, and immediately every one of them crouched at his feet. In despair before this man who seemed to bear a charmed life, his guards led him back to his prison. Here he still found Rusticus and Eleutherius, and many of the faithful, who had been thrust into the same dungeon during his trial. With tears of joy they welcomed him to their midst, and all their sorrow seemed at an end. The next morning Dionysius offered the Holy Sacrifice of the mass for his fellow prisoners. When the time came for giving the Holy Communion to the people, lo! Jesus Christ himself, shining in glory, appeared before them, and taking the sacred particles in his own hand, he communicated them, saying: "Receive ye my flesh; behold how great a reward awaits you from my own hand, when

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these light sufferings are over!" and Dionysius, and all his companions, were consoled and strengthened beyond their words to describe. Hardly was this over, when Dionysius, Rusticus, and Eleutherius were again led forth, and ordered to sacrifice to Mercury. "How long will you delay?" said Dionysius, whose heart had been ravished with joy by the vision of his Lord; "how long will you delay to give us our crown?" And with a face radiant with the joy of the angels and saints in heaven, he knelt on the ground with Rusticus and Eleutherius. They seemed thus to invite the sword of the executioner. A signal was given by the commander of the guard, and the three heads were struck off by three executioners, as if by one blow. But now, wonder of wonders! The body of Dionysius rose to its feet; he took in his hands his own dissevered head, and surrounded by a light almost insupportable, as if attended by angels, he walked two miles to a hill now called the *Martyr's Mount*, and there his sacred body laid itself down, as if to sleep! And so it was that more converts were added to the Church of Christ on the day of his death, than during all the days of his life.

The beautiful October days are steeped in sunshine. The orchards have cast their mellow fruit to the greensward below. The grapes, no longer shaded from the sun by their shrivelled leaves, hang luscious on their vines. The corn stands in stooks on the fertile meadows, with here and there a golden ear peeping from the dry husks. The heart of man is glad with the fruits of the harvest and of the vintage, while a thousand beauteous tints light up the grove, the hedge-side, the forest and the far hills, covered with the blue mists of autumn. We never tire of this glorious season; never tire of culling leaf after leaf from the showers that fall by the wayside. How that poplar stands, like one mass of shivering gold, dropping, leaf by leaf, like bright golden guineas, to the ground! Watch that maple! Yesterday there were faint streaks of rose on its pointed leaves. To-day,

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the summer green is only a pale yellow, and the rose has become a bright crimson; while the maple beyond, looks like the burning bûsh which Moses saw on Mount Horeb. And see! how every leaf of the climbing woodbine flushes and glows, and turns to pure flame! The earth has all the changing glory of the sky at sunset; and we hardly know which is the most gorgeous, the cloud floating in molten gold and *cinnabar** just above the horizon, or the maple, that catches the last beam of the setting sun.

In the midst of all this magnificence of nature's ritual, the Church puts on her blood-red vestments, on the 9th of October, to celebrate the martyrdom of Saint Dionysius, or Saint Denis, the apostle of France, and of his companions, Saints Rusticus and Eleutherius, singing, in the gladness of her heart: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going, they went and wept, casting their seed; but coming they shall come with joyfulness, bringing their sheaves with them."

**Cinnabar* is the name given by the old illuminators to the vermilion which they used with so much success in their paintings on vellum.



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SAINT URSULA AND HER COMPANIONS.

ONE morning—it seems strange that the mornings should have been just as bright fifteen hundred years ago as now—in the year of our Lord 450, there was seen off that northern coast of France called Brittany, a fleet of noble ships; not such as ride in our harbors on a bright morning in October, but noble in their day and century; ships made of twisted and knotted willow, smeared over with pitch and skillfully covered with stout hides; gay, too, with the royal colors of old Britain, from which the inhabitants of Brittany, or Little Britain, had formerly come. What a stir and excitement among the fishermen dwelling on the coast; and when word was brought to the king, Theonotus, he went with his courtiers to the high tower of his castle to watch the ships as they came to the nearest beach. Close to the king stood his beautiful daughter, his only child, Ursula. "O, my father, whence come the noble ships, and have they come for peace or for war?" "God knows, my child; but whether for peace or for war, our hospitality shall be offered to them. If for peace we shall thus fix their good intentions; if for war, we may thus take the malice from their hearts. God knows we have only to act like Christians, brave and hospitable." It was not long, however, before the barons who headed this expedition, with their long fair hair, blue eyes and reddish beard,

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tall and sun-browned but comely as they were hardy, appeared in sight, and one could plainly see that their errand was one of peace. They were greeted as friends by those sent out by the king to meet them at the gate and conduct them to the castle. The king commanded them to be brought straight to the banqueting hall, and then said to Ursula: "My daughter, you have taken the place of your departed mother (may she rest in peace!) and to your duty as a daughter is added the dignity of the queen of your father's court; you must help me, then, to welcome these strangers to Brittany." "Your pleasure is mine," said Ursula, and without delay took her place beside her father, the king.

If the Britons were glad, after their safe passage to this coast of mists and storms, to be welcomed so heartily by Theonotus and his court, how they were charmed by the grace, beauty and modesty of the young princess! To the eyes of the Britons, there was a kindness in the dignity of this Christian maiden which they had never seen before, and yet they were awed by her very gentleness. "It is indeed true," said the oldest of the barons to his companions, "and more than true, what we have heard of this princess; happy will it be for us if we can win so fair a bride for Prince Conon, and happy will it be for Britain to be ruled by such a queen. Our king was wise when he sent us across this rough channel." So delighted were they, that they could not conceal from Theonotus, as soon as Ursula had retired from the banquet, the object of their visit—the sole reason for for which they had turned their prows towards the stormy coast of Brittany—for it was no other than to secure the hand of the princess, Ursula, whose graces of mind and heart, already famous, had come to the ears of King Agrippinus, for his son Conon, the heir of the British throne.

The good old king, Theonotus, heard the ambassadors with a heavy heart; but he carried, as kings must carry, be their hearts ever so heavy, a fair countenance. "Noble lords, you

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honor me and my house, and I know your young prince to be of a most royal mind and of a good heart. But you must remember the princess is my only child, and if her grace, and beauty, and modesty, have so won your hearts, what must she not be to me? I beg you, noble lords and true ambassadors, to give me time for thought. Meanwhile, all that my castle and kingdom contains is at your service." The Britons were well pleased at this answer, and remembering all the mighty deeds of the Britons and the manly beauty, valor and goodness of the young prince, they doubted not of a still more favorable answer in the end.

Although the day had been so full of events, and Ursula had been called upon, for the first time in her life, to appear before strangers, yet she did not forget her accustomed attentions to her father, but went to him as soon as she knew that he was alone. She was surprised to find him sitting dejectedly with his head on his hand. "What has happened, my dear father? The strangers came as friends and the banquet was genial; why are you anxious and unhappy?"

"Ah, my child, all our peaceful years are over. These strangers came as friends, but they have come to take from me all that makes life happy. What would be a crown and a kingdom without you, my child! and they have come, in their brave ships and with all their grand equipage, to ask of me the only real treasure left to me on earth, and that is my daughter."

"But, my dear father, you need only tell these noble barons, so honorable and so courtly, that your daughter is pledged to an eternal Spouse; that, of all mortals, her father alone can claim her service."

"You forget, my child, that these noble Britons are all pagans! They have never heard of that Jesus to whom you are solemnly espoused, or, have heard of him only to despise him; they will never understand such a reason for rejecting the offer of their prince, and it will be a deadly insult in their eyes. No, no, my

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child; there is nothing but ruin and sorrow before us. I cannot give you to these pagans and thus force you to break your solemn vow; and to refuse their proffer of alliance, is to lay my kingdom open to their dreadful invasions. These ships which now lie so peacefully on the beach, would come to us full of warriors armed to the teeth and unsparing in their revenge. Alas! my poor child, upon what misfortunes have we not fallen!" And the king sank back overwhelmed by the picture before his mind, of his kingdom trampled upon by savage enemies, himself slain in battle, his child a captive. Ursula saw in a moment all that was in the mind of her father, and she bowed her head, not however in despondency, but in prayer; for while the head of the affectionate daughter was bent to the earth, the heart of the Christian virgin rose straight to the presence of him to whom she had plighted her solemn vows. A moment after she said, cheerily, "Do not be so cast down, my father; if you are perplexed as a Christian king, Christ, our heavenly king, will not leave you a prey to the mere ignorance of his claims upon our love and our fealty. You are a great king and a wise man, and I am a mere girl; but it is not the wisdom of the wise which is needed to answer these proud ambassadors. Do not be fretted over this visit of the Britons; give them swift audience, and allow me, with the help of God who can inspire even babes to utter his wise counsels, to answer the ambassadors in this grave matter."

Theonotus knew that it was not presumption in his daughter which prompted so strange a request. He saw the recollected look on her face as she had bent forward a moment before, and he saw, with something more than his bodily eyes, the look of rapture on her face when she again raised it. He knew where her soul had been in that one moment, swiftly as it flew, and could only say: "As you will, my child."

The next morning was appointed for the audience; and Ursula, without the least anxiety or trepidation prepared herself for the

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interview. With the first streak of dawn she was in the chapel of the castle, where was offered, every morning, the Holy Sacrifice of the mass. There she renewed, her face radiant with something holier than mortal courage, her vows to her divine spouse, and received him in the Sacrament of the altar, as the strength, the wisdom and the hope of her soul. After this, she was attired by her maids in her most magnificent robes and beautiful jewels and took her seat on the throne at her father's side, as became the princess of the land. Then the ambassadors were formally presented, and paid their homage to the king and the princess, and formally announced their errand to the court of Brittany. They were received and their salutations returned by Theonotus, with the majestic bearing of a prince who rules not for himself but for his people, and by Ursula with an unspeakable grace and dignity.

"My daughter, the Princess Ursula, will herself answer the ambassadors," said the king; and Ursula, inclining modestly towards them with a countenance of heavenly serenity, said: "I thank my lord, the king of England, and Conon, his princely son, and his noble barons, and you, sirs, his honorable ambassadors, for the honor you have done me, so much greater than my deserving. I hold myself bound to your king as to a second father, and to the prince his son as to my brother and bridegroom, for to no other will I ever listen. But I have to ask three things. First, he shall give for me, as my ladies and companions, ten virgins of the noblest blood in his kingdom, and to each of these a thousand attendants, and to me a thousand maidens to wait on me. Secondly, he shall allow me to do honor to my virginity; and with my companions, to visit the holy shrines where repose the bodies of the saints. And my third demand is, that the prince and all his court shall receive baptism; for other than a perfect Christian I cannot wed." King Theonotus was filled with wonder at the heavenly wisdom of this answer, for he saw plainly

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that either the king of England would refuse these demands, or if he should grant them, then the court of England would be a Christian court, the king a Christian king, and eleven thousand virgins redeemed and dedicated to the service of God; while the ambassadors themselves heard all this with respectful admiration for this young girl. They did not try to conceal their joy at her answer, seeming to forget the hard conditions which accompanied it, and each one kneeled and kissed her hand as that of his future queen.

On their return to England they were admitted to a solemn audience with the king, the young prince and his chief nobles, and the answer of the young princess of Brittany was fully given, with all the circumstances and with every praise which could be lavished upon a mortal woman and princess. On hearing the conditions, some of the proud barons murmured, and Agrippinus said to the young prince, Conon; "You shall have the same privilege as the princess—you can accept or reject the conditions for yourself."

The young prince, as if an inspiration from heaven had taken possession of his soul, flushed with a noble exaltation of mind and feeling, exclaimed: "Oh my king and my father, oh noble barons and faithful ambassadors, what can compare to a prince and a people with a noble, virtuous and wise queen! Therefore do I answer that no conditions can be hard which secure to your son, my father, to your prince, noble barons, and to Britain, the princess, Ursula. And since the religion of this princess has brought forth so sweet a flower of wisdom and of virtue, let us hasten to become Christians also. Call for those priests who have been so long banished from the court of the kings of Britain; call them from their hiding places in the dark mountains and lonely marshes, and let us receive from them the baptism of Christians. As to the train of virgins which she demands, to what nobler service can British maidens be called, than to the

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service of a princess so gentle and so discreet, and who is to be their queen!" The king, the barons, finally, the whole kingdom, caught the enthusiasm of the young prince who was baptized as soon as possible, with all his court; while, in answer to the king's letters, there came trooping in from all parts of his dominions noble virgins, accomplished in female learning, spotless and beautiful, attired in rich garments, wearing jewels of gold and silver, and eager to attend upon Princess Ursula, who was to wed Prince Conon. All these assembling in Brittany, Ursula received them not only with great gladness and courtesy, but with a sisterly tenderness; and she said to the good Theonotus: "See, my father, how beautiful a harvest is ripening for heaven! See how many virgins are to be crowned with an everlasting blessedness! See, my father, how Christ honors the king who does honor to him!"

When Ursula had collected all these virgins, she desired them to meet her on a fresh and fair morning of spring, in a meadow, near the city, of the freshest green, enameled all over with the brightest flowers. She then ascended a throne which was raised in the midst of the flowery meadow, and spoke to all the assembled virgins of things concerning the goodness and glory of God and of Christ and of the love of God and the happiness of a life wholly given to him. Never had these innocent young girls heard anything which so moved their hearts, or wakened in them such an eager wishfulness, as this picture which the holy princess put before them of the joys of heaven and the sweetness found in the service of God; and lifting up their hands and voices, while they wept tears of joy, they promised to follow her wherever she should lead them. And as there might be many among them who had never received baptism, Ursula said to them: "All who would follow me, must first be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, because, as none can hope to enter heaven without the seal of this sacrament on their

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souls, it will be in vain to try to serve God acceptably without it. Therefore, let all who have not been baptized come to the borders of this clear stream." And they came with great gladness; and all those eleven thousand virgins, who stood around Ursula that calm evening in spring, were white in their baptismal innocence. When this had been done, Ursula wrote to Prince Conon, saying that as he had fulfilled all her demands, he had good leave to come to Brittany forthwith. The prince, as became a true knight, came immediately; and he was received with great honor by the court and by the people of Brittany. But Ursula remembered one condition still to be fulfilled. When she had received the prince, in the presence of her father and all the court, she said: "Three years yet belong to me, wherein I can honor God as one wholly devoted to him; and during this time, to visit the holy shrines of the saints, in company with these virgins placed by your courtesy in attendance upon me, is an homage to God befitting your dignity and my own." The prince, who found his heart lifted up in the presence of Ursula above all human considerations, immediately answered: "Nothing could be more worthy, noble princess, of your honor or of mine. Remember that I am but a novice in your religion; and how can I better spend the time of your absence, than by learning from your father, the king of Brittany, the science of ruling like a Christian king?"

Ursula was delighted with the holy dispositions of the prince, and after receiving the blessing of her aged father, who saw her depart with tears indeed, but still consoled by the remembrance of all the wonders which had been performed under his eyes, this army of virgins set forth for Rome. When they arrived at Cologne, on the banks of the beautiful Rhine, they stopped for a while to rest, and it was there revealed to Ursula, that on their return they would all suffer upon this spot a glorious martyrdom for Christ. No sooner did she hear this glad news than she told

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it to her companions, who lifted up their voices in thanksgiving that they should be found worthy thus to die. When the arrival of Ursula and her companions at Rome was told to the saintly pope, Cyriacus, he was at first greatly troubled in mind, but he went forth to meet them with all his clergy; and when Ursula, kneeling before him, explained to him the cause of their coming, he could not express his admiration. He not only gave them his blessing but commanded that they should be suitably entertained. As if there was to be no bound to the perfection of all those who came under her influence, the very day that Ursula entered Rome by one gate, Conon entered it by another; and receiving, also, the blessing of the holy father, felt his whole soul penetrated with the same aspirations for heaven which had so long held the soul of Ursula in such sweet obedience. When the princess told him the revelation made to her at Cologne, Conon, whose mind was utterly changed, said to her: "Believe me, my beloved Ursula, I no longer aspire to a life of earthly happiness, even with you. Allow me, instead of crowning you queen of the Britons, to share your crown of martyrdom." Ursula could then open her whole mind to him, and they rejoiced together that God had thus permitted her not only to keep her vows, but to enrich this offering of herself by the conversion of so many generous and innocent souls.

When this blessed company had duly performed their devotions at the shrines of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Cyriacus would gladly have kept them longer in Rome, but Ursula said: "It is not fitting for those who have been promised a crown to delay to win it." Then," said Cyriacus, "I will accompany you, and haply I may be found worthy to win this crown also." Thus it happened that the blessed Ursula and her virgins departed from Rome in the company of Saint Cyriacus, two of his holy cardinals and of many bishops, inspired by the example of these thousands of virgins hastening back to meet death for Christ; as also

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by Prince Conon, who had taken from Pope Cyriacus the name of *Ethereus*, to express the purity and regeneration of his soul.

But while the whole Christian church in Italy was struck with admiration at so beautiful a spectacle, the pagan hearts of three Roman captains, commanders of the imperial troops in Germany, were seized with a sudden hatred for Christians, and they said one to another: "Suffer these Christian maidens to return through Germany and they will convert the nation!" "If they marry," said another, "all their children will be Christians!" And the third said, "Let us cut them utterly off; send a messenger to the savage Huns, who are now besieging Cologne, never to allow them to pass the city, and we shall hear no more of this princess Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins." And thus it fell out, that when this peaceful army of saints came near Cologne, they were met by the barbarians. At first they stood still before these venerable prelates and holy maidens, but remembering their orders—to cut utterly off and spare none—they fell upon their unresisting victims like wolves thirsty for blood. One of the first to fall was Prince Ethereus, struck by an arrow at the very feet of Ursula. By hundreds and thousands they strewed the plain before the great city of Cologne, while Ursula inspired every one by her voice, her heavenly aspect and her words of celestial cheer. Finally, the barbarians, awed by the majestic beauty of Ursula and finding they had no power to strike her, led her before their prince, who no sooner beheld her, than he said: "Weep not; thou hast indeed lost thy companions, but I will be thy husband and thou shalt be the greatest queen in all Germany!" "Oh thou cruel man! blind and senseless as thou art cruel!" exclaimed Ursula, "dost thou think I can weep for those who have died so gloriously, or dost thou hold me to be so base and so cowardly that I would consent to survive these noble companions and beloved sisters? Thou art deceived, oh son of Satan! for I defy thee and him whom thou servest!" A livid

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rage seized the barbarian prince when he heard these words of holy scorn. Bending the bow which he held in his hand, with three arrows* he pierced her breast so that she fell dead, and her spirit ascended to heaven with the glorious company of virgins whom she had led on to a happy martyrdom and with the good young prince, Ethereus, Pope Cyriacus and his holy priests. There, palms in their hands and crowns ever increasing in splendor upon their heads, they will rejoice before God in everlasting blessedness, while the Church on earth, on the 21st of October of every year, celebrates their happy memory.

*In pictures, Saint Ursula is known by the arrow which she carries in her hand.



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SAINT WINEFRIDE.

ONE evening in early autumn, before the snow had fallen on the hills of North Wales, an aged monk stood before the gate of Thevith, son of Elnith. Now, in his life time, Elnith was the lord who stood next to the king. Thevith was, therefore, rich in honors and rich in lands and in all the goods of this world. But more than this, both Thevith and his wife Wenlo, were rich in Christian faith and in the good works that flow from it, as a stream from its fountain head. When, therefore, in the year 618, an aged monk was seen at his gate, Thevith did not wait to send a servant to ask him to come within his castle, but went himself to welcome the holy wayfarer. "Do not stand thus outside my gate, good father, but bless my house by entering it.

"Thanks, my son, for the evening is close at hand, and there is a chill in the air, even now."

In these early days great lords did not hold themselves aloof from their fellowmen, but lived among their vassals and servants, very much as Abraham and Isaac lived among theirs. Above all other guests, however, the monks of the scattered monasteries were welcomed by these simple-hearted lords of the olden time. What then was their joy, as, the supper being over, the aged

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man said to them: "You have welcomed me as the servant of God to your home; but know that I am also your kinsman; your mother's brother; and, like her, descended from Anna, sister to good King Arthur." At these words Thevith and Wenlo were so carried away with joy, that the very servants were glad at the coming of their holy kinsman. "Bring hither the little Winefride," said Thevith to Wenlo, "for she must get the first blessing of our uncle—of Beuno, the brother of my own mother." And as he said this, Thevith wept on the neck of his uncle.

When the little Winefride came, led by the hand of her mother, the heart of Beuno went forth to this child of a most *fair countenance;* for this is what her name meant, in the Anglo Saxon tongue. He did not speak the blessing, which they saw him give to her with such fervor; but the child looked more lovely than ever from that moment. When all this had been done, Beuno told Thevith of his monastery within sight of the white summit of Mount Snowdon; his beloved Clunnock or Clynog Vaur; and how, after having separated himself from all his kindred, he had felt drawn by the Spirit of God to visit Thevith. No sooner did Thevith and Wenlo hear this, than they exclaimed: "Ah, good kinsman, why do you ever leave us? Here is land, all that you can wish, at your service. Here, too, is our castle; or another, should you desire to build one; but do not leave us. Let us be guided by your voice in the way to heaven. Let our little Winefride be brought up at your feet. It was for our sakes that the Spirit of God moved you to take this journey."

Their persuasions seemed good to the mind of Beuno. The next morning they further urged him to take full possession of the dwelling they were in, and they remove to one which overlooked it; and the holy man could not say no. It was then arranged that they should come every morning, with the little Winefride and

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their household, to the mass of Saint Beuno; for our Beuno was a living saint, as was declared after his death. Close beside the dwelling, or castle, which had thus been made over to Beuno, Thevith and his workmen made all haste to build a church. We read that the emperor Constantine, when the foundations of the ancient Saint Peter's church were laid, took off his royal robes, seized a spade, broke the ground and carried twelve baskets of earth and threw them upon the new wall, in honor of the twelve apostles, the foundation stones of the church. In the same spirit, Thevith labored with his servants to complete the house of God, and to make all things ready for the Holy Sacrifice. In this church, Thevith and Wenlo tasted all the sweetness to be found in the service of Jesus Christ. Whenever Beuno preached, the little Winefride was placed at his feet, that she might drink in, all the more eagerly, the sense of the heavenly doctrines. As the little maid grew in reason and in the knowledge of virtue, she desired to live as one dedicated wholly to God. "I will never marry," she thought to herself; "for how could I then give all my time and thoughts to him whom I love above all things?" On the other hand, she saw herself the only child of her parents, and she knew they wished her to marry. In this perplexity, as in every other, she trusted herself to her holy director and kinsman, Saint Beuno.

"Have no fear, little one," said the venerable man, "I will speak to your good parents. I can easily tell if it will be pleasing to them to see you in the service of God. Being an only child, you must not break their hearts; but, if God indeed calls you to the state of holy virginity, he will reconcile your parents to his will." And so indeed it proved; for as soon as Beuno had fully made known to them Winefride's wish, both Thevith and Wenlo exclaimed: "What greater honor could we desire for an only child than to know her called to be the spouse of Christ! Or how can we thank you, as we ought, for having in-

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structed our child how to answer this call of her Bridegroom?" Nothing now was wanting to the happiness of the young Winefride, or of her good parents, or of the holy man Beuno. Together they walked in the path of perfection; and their way to heaven seemed bordered with roses. Could it be that our saint was to win her crown without once feeling the weight of the cross; without making one sacrifice for her Lord? Our question will soon be answered.

Alain, the prince of North Wales, had a son Cradac, who neither practiced virtue himself nor respected it in others. He had seen and admired the beautiful daughter of Thevith. What cared he, although he had heard that she was betrothed to the King of Heaven, and would soon be espoused to him! He would not have dared to claim her, had she been betrothed to a neighboring prince; for this would have led to open war. But God he did not fear, because he did not see God. Cradac watched his time, like a thief determined to rob a house of its fairest treasure. He found, one Sunday, that the pious Thevith and Wenlo, with all their household, had gone to mass, leaving only Winefride at home. No sooner was every one inside the church, than Cradac came to the gate, enquiring for the lord Thevith. Winefride, according to the simple custom of that day, replied modestly: "The lord Thevith is at mass. Will my lord, the prince, go to the church, or wait until his return?" The prince would wait within. But no sooner was the hospitable door open, than he proposed to Winefride to share the honors of his kingdom; although he knew that this proposal should have been made only to her parents. With the holy prudence of the saints, our Winefride did not rebuke him; but said very modestly: "Will my lord, the prince, allow me to retire for a few moments?"

The prince did not think of refusing. Perhaps he was so blind as to suppose this modest virgin was flattered by his ad-

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miration, and wished to be still more beautiful in his eyes. But how little did he know the heart of this Christian girl, betrothed to the Lord of lords! How little did he know that her heart was deaf to all praises but the approbation of her God! How little did he suspect the carefulness with which she guarded her mind and heart, that nothing might ever soil her robe of baptismal innocence! While Cradac was impatiently expecting her return, he saw her speeding toward the church. A sudden rage took possession of his heart. Was it thus she treated a prince? With one fierce hand on his sword he ran in the same path as the maiden. She heard his steps, but only quickened her own. He came near enough for her to hear him shout: "Halt, or thy head shall roll to the church door," but she only raised her heart to God, offering her life as a token of her love for him alone. The steps of the prince gained upon hers. One curse of anger and hate from his lips, and at a single stroke of his heavy sword, the head of Winefride, the virgin of a most fair countenance, rolled down the steep hill to the door of the chapel!

A cry of horror broke from the worshipers near the door. A cry of horror and of anguish, too, when they saw the head of their gentle mistress thus laid at their feet. Thevith and Wenlo rushed from their place near the altar, and Beuno turned from the unconsecrated host on his paten, to see the head of his holy kinswoman and child in religion, lifeless before him. With tears and moans the lovely young head was laid in Beuno's hands, and the whole congregation went in procession to the place where the body still lay, like a stalk without its lily. There, too, stood the murderer Cradac, wiping his bloody sword on the grass at his feet. Beuno saw at a glance all the wicked intentions of the young prince. "Impious one," exclaimed the holy priest, "dost thou feel no remorse for having thus murdered an innocent child, the betrothed of the Lord? Since thou hast hardened thy heart, after thy great offence, thou

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art no longer worthy of the divine mercy, but only of vengeance." And no sooner were these words spoken than Cradac fell dead at the feet of Saint Beuno! The beholders, struck with awe at this judgment of God on the wicked prince, silently took up the body of the lifeless Winefride to bear it to the church. The valley in which the church stood had been called, always, the dry valley, because no springs were found in it; but as the sad procession came to the spot where Winefride's head had struck as it rolled down the hill into this valley, what did every one see but an open fountain-head among the blood-stained rocks, sending up its sparkling waters to the sunshine!

Rejoiced by such a proof of the virgin's sanctity, they entered the church. There Saint Beuno joined the head to the body, and proceeded to offer up the Holy Sacrifice. When the *Ite missa est* had been said, he raised his hands and eyes to heaven, praying aloud: "O Lord Jesus Christ, by thy love for this holy virgin, who shed her blood for the love of thee, show thy omnipotent mercy towards us this day!" and all the people in the midst of their sobs, responded aloud, "Amen!" Without a sigh, but joyfully as the young child arises from its refreshing sleep, the maiden sat upright before them; gently brushing from her face and eyes the dust of the foot-path by which her lovely head had rolled, so obediently, towards her dear Saint Beuno. Who can describe the joy and exultation that followed? The gratitude of the heart-broken parents, the edification of the people? Strange to say, her parents, Saint Beuno, all who crowded around her, could find no other sign of the separation of her head from her body, than a pure white line, no wider than a fine thread, around her neck; and this line remained until her death. The first burst of admiration and wonder was hardly over, before Winefride kneeled humbly at the feet of Saint Beuno and said: "Can you any longer put off the giving of that veil which will make me a true spouse of Jesus Christ; known to all men as belonging only to

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him?" The venerable saint had no wish to refuse this request, and before she had left the church she had made her solemn vow of virginity. When they stepped from the chapel door, it was to see the miraculous fountain bubbling up from the place where her head had struck and rested before the altar. Beuno paused, saying to Winefride: "I have three favors to promise thee. The first is, that the bloody stains shall never be washed off from these stones, but shall remain as triumphant signs of your blood spilled in defence of your chastity. The second is, that any person devoutly asking for temporal blessings or freedom from spiritual or bodily distresses, shall obtain the same at your intercession, by paying his devotions three times at this holy well; if so be that his request is for the glory of God. The third is, that you shall have a community of pious virgins, like yourself, at this place; and when, once a year, you wish to send a present to me, you have but to lay it on the waters of this fountain. The stream flowing from it will bring thy gift close to a cell on the sea-shore, where I shall find a home." How joyful were his first promises! But when he said, in the last one, that he should leave this sacred spot, everyone was sad. None, however, so sad as our Winefride. "Ah! my father," she said, "who will now lead me in the heavenly way? You have been my guide thus far." But Beuno was not to be moved from his resolution. The same Holy Spirit that had led him to the gate of Thevith, now told him that his work here had been accomplished. Therefore, staff in hand, with no other goods than he brought with him, Beuno turned towards the sea coast.

The story of all these events soon brought a number of pious virgins to Winefride, to be her companions in religion, as Beuno had promised. The waters of the miraculous fountain, so far from growing less, increased; and many were the sicknesses and ills healed by its use, and the prayers of Winefride. One year from the day on which these wonders took place, Beuno was

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walking on the sea shore close beside his cell, when he saw a bundle floating towards him. For the moment he had forgotten his prediction to his beloved daughter in Christ, and wondered what it could mean. Taking the bundle from the water, he found it quite dry and on opening it, saw a curiously embroidered vestment, wrought by the hands of Winefride and her virgins. Then he remembered his promise to her; and the vestment was to him above all price. The grateful Winefride never failed to send a present to Saint Beuno, in this manner, to the last year of his life. It pleased Almighty God, who had wrought such wonders in behalf of Saint Winefride, to keep this fact in the memory of the Christian people on that coast. From that day until the present, the place where Winefride's first present to Saint Beuno landed, is called in Welsh, Porthy Casseg; the usual way of pronouncing, Porthy Cassuel, or the *Port of the Vestment.* Near the spot is a large parish church where Saint Beuno was buried; for his last monastery was founded there.

And the miraculous fountain? To-day, if you look sharply over any good map of England and Wales, you will see, on the western side of the river Dee, quite at the northwestern corner of Wales, a dot; and close by the dot its name: *Holy Well.* If you were to visit this Holy Well, you would find, that for more than a thousand years the stones have kept their blood stains, as Saint Beuno promised to Saint Winefride. You would also find the waters rich in the gift of healing; and miracles would be related to you which you could not dispute, even if you were not so happy as to see one with your own eyes. The wonders wrought at Saint Winefride's Holy Well, are talked of to-day by the people in that region, as enthusiastically as they were eleven hundred years ago. Her feast is celebrated on the 3d day of November; the feast of a virgin and martyr. Winefride is a favorite name, not only in Wales, but throughout Ire-

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land and England. It is still given to parish churches and schools, while many a child, even in America, answers gayly to the name of *Winefride.* If there is one of these among my readers, let her remember all the gracious promises made to those who follow the example of Saint Winefride, and ask her intercession.



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SAINT MARTIN OF TOURS.

THE winter of 335 was one of intense cold in the provinces of North France. Many persons perished there, for want of proper clothing and other exposures which come from poverty. One day, as a regiment of soldiers and officers were marching through the gate of the ancient city of Amiens, in the province of Somme, a poor man, clothed literally in rags and shivering with cold, held out his thin hand for charity. Gayly-mounted officers and sturdy, well-clad soldiers, passed him without dropping a single coin into the waiting palm; without one word of inquiry concerning his needs; without one word of sympathy for his sufferings. At length a young officer, hardly eighteen years of age, rode, according to his rank, through the gate and before the poor beggar. A flush passed over his face as this suffering fellow-creature met his eye. There was no need of asking what he wanted, for he was scarcely clothed by his miserable rags. Without a word, the sword of the young officer was drawn from its scabbard and before an expostulation could be uttered by his companions, his military cloak had been cut in two; and while one half still hung from his own shoulders, the other had been thrown over the shoulders of the shivering beggar. The young officer bent gently over his saddle-

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bow for a moment towards the beggar, saying: "It is all I have to give, for I have no money;" and then spurred on with his regiment.

A circumstance so extraordinary did not escape the sharp eyes of a Roman legion. There were enough to laugh at the ridiculous appearance which the young officer made with his fragment of a cloak. There were others who said in their hearts: "Some rare grace must be waiting for this unbaptized youth." There were many Christians, at that time, in the Roman armies; and some, perhaps, felt ashamed to see themselves outdone by the son of a pagan, and he still unbaptized. "This Martin," they said to one another, "should be a Christian. We have long believed him to be one in his heart, and this day proves it." As to Martin himself, he seemed unconscious of the scanty folds of his cloak; but his always quiet bearing, so unlike the usual haughtiness of a young officer, seemed even quieter than ever. That night he dreamed that Jesus Christ appeared to him, wearing on his shoulders the half of his cloak which had been given to the beggar, and he said to Martin: "Look at this cloak, and see if you recognize it." Then the shining visitor turned from the young officer to the troop of angels who accompanied him, saying: "Martin, although only a catechumen, has clothed me with this garment!"

With the passing of the vision, sleep passed from the young man's eyes. This Jesus, who had thus deigned to appear to him in his sleep, was no stranger to Martin, who, from his very birth, had seemed to care only for the things of God. Never had he bowed his knee to an idol. We must suppose, indeed, that he was favored by a Christian nurse, who thus protected his infancy, and instilled into his mind the essence of Christian truth. Although born in Sabaria, a town in Upper Pannonia, now Lower Hungary, his parents carried him with them to the city of Pavia, in Italy, while he was still an infant. It was in Pavia, and when

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only ten years old, that he found his way to a Christian church, and asked to be received among the catechumens, or among those who were receiving instruction as a preparation for Christian baptism. His request was granted, and the child attended the instructions whenever he had an opportunity. Perhaps his father had discovered this, and was determined to take him away from his instructors; for he insisted upon sending Martin into the army, at the early age of fifteen, accompanied by a single servant. There was a law, by which the sons of veteran officers and soldiers were obliged to serve in the legion five years. It was this law, which Martin's father made an excuse for compelling him to take the military oath and enter the ranks of the cavalry. In his wandering life, Martin was exposed to all the dangers besetting a young officer; but he remembered the lessons of his Christian teachers, and practiced them as best he could. It was this Christian seed in his heart, which had suddenly sprung forth and blossomed under the imploring look of the beggar at the gate of Amiens. Who can say that the same Jesus, who once sat so patiently beside a well in Samaria, waiting for a soul that he might save it, did not really stand, as a beggar, beside the gate of Amiens on that cold day, in the winter of 335, waiting for Martin?

Certain it is, the young officer lost no time in securing the grace of baptism. From this time, also, we see his noble soul entirely given up to the love of God. If the life of an officer in the conquering legions had ever had a charm for him, this charm was over. His only desire was to give his mind and his body, as he had already given his soul, to the service of Jesus Christ, who had condescended to wear a fragment of his cloak. Suddenly the Germans made an assault upon the territories occupied by the Roman forces in France. In order to inspire both officers and soldiers with greater ardor against the German tribes, a donation was distributed among them. When Martin heard what was going on, he said to himself: "How can I receive this dona-

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tion, when I have resolved to leave the army of the emperor, to serve under the banner of the cross?" Therefore, when Martin was called upon to receive the emperor's donation, he said gravely: "I cannot honorably consent to take this money, since I have resolved to leave the army altogether; my five years of service are over, and I ask for nothing but my dismission."

"A fine time to ask for a dismission, when your legion is on the very eve of battle! This is not the sort of courage which the emperor expects from the meanest soldier, much less from an officer, and this officer the son of a veteran! No, no, my young Pannonian! Do not think to blind our eyes by such plausible talk."

We could pardon a young Christian just past twenty, and a soldier too, if his cheek flushed under so mortifying a charge. "Sire," said our Martin to his commander, "sire, have you ever found me wanting either in fidelity or bravery?"

"So far from it," replied his commander, "that I am more astonished than any one else can be, at your desire to leave the service at this moment or even at all."

"Then," said Martin, "to prove to you that I am not wanting in the courage of a soldier, I ask as a favor that you place me to-morrow in the front of the battle, and not only in the front and in the post of greatest danger, but unarmed. In the name of the Lord Jesus and protected, not by a helmet or buckler, but by the sign of the cross, I will thrust myself into the very thickest squadrons of the enemy without fear." The cheeks of the young officer glowed with enthusiam as he spoke, and his eyes beamed with a radiance which made his heathen accusers shrink abashed from his presence. The commander replied: "The post of danger is yours, Martin; not only because you have asked for it, but because you can be trusted with it." That very night, contrary to every expectation, an embassy arrived from the German camp with conditions of peace, which were most readily agreed

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to by the Romans. Historians do not hesitate to say, that the prayers of the young officer prevented the deadly battle from taking place the following day.

The next time that Martin made his application to be released from his military honors his request was granted, although the commander said to his officers: "We are losing a brave and promising young comrade. He has never shrunk from dangers; I may rather say has always courted them; and yet his courage has never proved rash." Having left the camp and with it all his military honors, Martin hastened to Saint Hilary, the holy bishop of Poitiers. But he did not tarry long with Saint Hilary, for there was a duty which lay near his heart and pressed upon his conscience; this was the conversion of his parents, who were still pagans. Animated with this one idea, he did not hesitate to undertake, alone, a journey through a wild country and the most mountainous in all Europe. While crossing the Alps he was seized by a band of robbers. They found little to tempt their avarice in the pockets of the young traveler; but one of them would have killed him if another had not held his arm. "For shame, Enrick! to kill a brave fellow who has given us all the money he has, without once asking for mercy. He did not wince or shrink when you drew your sword. He deserves better at our hands than this."

But if they found Martin brave, they also found him humble. One of them asked him: "Who are you?" Instead of giving his military history, which would have excited the admiration of the robbers, Martin replied: "I am a Christian."

"But did you really not fear the sword as it flashed before your eyes?"

"In truth, my friends, I never felt more calm or secure; for the Divine Goodness, which is always near us, is nearer still in times of danger. My only grief at present is, to see you, who are capable of living such noble lives, engaged in such pursuits;

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to see you, in fact, ignorant of the way to heaven." The robbers, who could not but admire his courage, listened to him while he told them the wonderful story of Jesus Christ, and of his claims on their love and their service; but the one who had attempted to kill him seemed the most touched of all. In due time he accompanied Martin through the most dangerous part of his journey, became a Christian, and led a penitential life in a monastery. The story, indeed, was told by him instead of by Martin.

When he arrived at Pannonia, great was the joy of his parents. His mother was easily won to follow so noble and well-beloved a son, and his words were to her like words from heaven. Of his father, we hear no such cheering news; and many a time, when Martin found hardened sinners and stiff-necked pagans yielding before his instructions, the image of his own father resisting the light of Christianity must have sent a sharp pang through his soul.

This pious errand accomplished, at least as far as he was allowed to accomplish it, he returned to Poitiers and to Saint Hilary. The bishop, at his earnest request, gave him a spot of land two leagues from the city. On this land he built a monastery, which was in existence in the eighth century, and, some think, was the first monastery in Gaul, or France. To this monastery he welcomed not only perfect Christians. but those who desired to become Christians, remembering his own childhood in a pagan society. Among these was a young man preparing for baptism. Very soon after the arrival of this catechumen, Martin was called from home. What was his grief, on returning, to find that the young man had died suddenly without baptism. The youth had already been prepared for burial when Martin arrived; and no sooner did he behold the lifeless body than he burst into tears. Then feeling within himself a divine inspiration, he ordered the monks to leave the room. Like another Elias, he stretched himself on the dead youth, and prayed with a fervor

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which heaven did not seem able to resist; for he felt the body growing warm under his touch. At length the young man moved his limbs, opened his eyes and was welcomed back to life by his friend and by all the monks. Baptism was immediately administered to the catechumen; but he lived many years after to be a standing witness to the mercy of God, and to the efficacy of Martin's holy prayers. This was not the only miracle wrought by our Martin; and when the time came for another bishop to be given to the city of Tours, in a province near Poitiers, Martin was the one upon whom the choice fell. But while honors and duties were thus forced upon him, our Martin kept all the symplicity and humility of his first fervor. Soon after he was made bishop, he showed that he was the same Martin who divided his military cloak with his sword, in order to clothe a shivering beggar at the gate of Amiens. While preaching on a festival day in the city of Tours, he saw a poor man whose clothing scarcely sufficed to cover him. The bishop spoke to his archdeacon: "Bring some garment to cover this destitute man," and went on with his sermon. The archdeacon, thinking it would be time enough when the sermon was over, delayed to bring the garment. The bishop no sooner perceived this, than he called the poor man to him, took off his own tunic and laid it on the shoulders of the half-clad child of God, saying: "Take thy place now, my son."

But Martin was not one who pitied the ills of the mortal body, relieved its necessities and left the immortal soul uncared for. In those early ages of Christianity, idolatry was to be found everywhere; and everywhere it resisted the knowledge of the one true God. With incredible zeal, unwearied perseverance and invincible patience, Martin, bishop of Tours, made war upon the idols in his vast diocese. He not only taught the people that there was one God, who created all things, but he destroyed the idols and their temples. Idolatry was utterly hateful in the eyes of Martin, for it deprived Almighty God of the worship and the

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love due from his own creatures. Martin did not wait to see if the idolators would be angry. Prayer was the only weapon by which he defended himself and his followers from their fury, and thus idolatry was utterly rooted out from his diocese.

When Maximus was proclaimed emperor by his own soldiers, many persons waited upon him with flattering speeches, hoping to win his favor; but Martin held aloof from the emperor, unless obliged to speak with him on business. Finally the emperor invited Martin to the imperial table; but Martin refused the invitation, saying: "How can I dine with a man who has deprived one emperor of his life and another of his dominions?" Maximus, so far from being angry, took pains to assure the bishop that his office had been forced upon him, and that he had never consented to the death of any one excepting in battle. After this, Martin consented to dine with him; taking, as his companion, one of his own priests. The emperor made a great feast, and seated the priest between two counts of the highest rank, while Martin, the bishop, sat on a seat beside the emperor himself. In the midst of the entertainment an officer presented a cup, as usual, to Maximus, who presented it to the bishop, expecting the bishop to hand it to him in return; but Martin, instead, handed it to his priest, as the one most worthy at the table. This action, which we might suppose would have offended the emperor, was really applauded and commended by him; for he knew that Martin wished to teach him, by this act, that he regarded the holy Order of Priesthood as superior to any honors to be conferred by men.

Perhaps few of the saints have written poetry; although some of the saints, like Saint Bernard, Saint Thomas of Aquin, Saint Ambrose, and Venerable Bede, wrote poetry which is still preserved by the Church in her holy offices. But whether they wrote poetry or not, they were all poets in this sense, that all the saints expressed beautiful sentiments in such beautiful words,

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that we call these sentences poetry. Saint Martin performed actions, and even wrought miracles, which have inspired poets and painters; and he also expressed heavenly ideas in heavenly language. Once, seeing a sheep newly shorn, he was true to his old virtue of charity; for he said to those around him: "This sheep has fulfilled the precept given by our Lord in his gospel; for having enough for two coats, he has given one of them to such as have need. Let us do likewise."

The blessed Martin, bishop of Tours, lived to be more than eighty years old before he was called to his repose. When his clergy and monks saw him sick unto death, they entreated him not to leave them, exclaiming: "Father, why do you forsake us? To whom will you leave us? How soon the ravening wolves will fall upon your flock!" And Saint Martin, although he had lived to so great an age and had endured such great hardships, never having had an easy life from his boyhood, exclaimed in reply: "Lord, if I am still necessary to thy people, I refuse no labor. Thy will be done!" These holy words are repeated by every priest when he reads the office of Saint Martin on his feast, the 11th of November.

When, notwithstanding the prayers of his people, the aged bishop drew near his end, his disciples entreated him to allow them to lay a little straw under his emaciated body, but he said: "It does not become a Christian to die otherwise than on ashes; I should sin, did I leave you any other example." He prayed continually, with his hands and eyes raised to heaven. His priests, fearing that he would thus shorten his hours upon earth, said: "Father, rest your hands for a little, and turn on one side for a short sleep." But eighty years of life had taught Saint Martin the value of every moment as a preparation for death, and his reply was: "Brethren, allow me to look towards heaven rather than towards earth, that my soul may know how to direct its flight to the Lord, to whom it is going." Afterwards, seeing

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the enemy of his soul coming towards him, he said: "What dost thou here, cruel beast? Thou hast no part in me. Abraham's bosom is open to receive me!" And with these words on his lips, he rendered up his holy soul to God. At this same moment, too, his face and whole body became glorious in their beauty, and those who stood around his bed believed that they heard the songs of angels and archangels who had come to welcome him, and to lead his soul into the presence of God.

Saint Martin died in a small town on the very borders of his diocese; but the city of Tours claimed his precious relics. The people of all the neighboring country flocked out to meet him when he was brought to the city, and even the inhabitants of neighboring cities. Two thousand monks were in the procession, and a multitude of consecrated virgins. All melted into tears; and no one doubted that he had entered into his glory. He was carried to his burial with hymns, and was laid in a little grave near the monastery.

His successor, Saint Brice, built a chapel over his tomb; and about the year 470 Saint Perpetuus, bishop of Tours, founded the great church and monastery that is still in existence. His relics were placed in a magnificent sarcophagus, behind the altar. This was rifled by the Huguenots and the bones scattered to the winds; but parts had already been given to other churches, and the faithful still rejoice in the relics of "the blessed man, Martin, bishop of the city of Tours," as he is called in the office for his feast.

In many churches of Europe, we find not only one picture of a saint, but a series of pictures, representing the principal events of his life. You must consider this little tribute in honor of Saint Martin, not as one grand picture, but as a series of pictures, each one giving you an interesting event in the life of this great servant of God. The feast of Saint Martin, which is on

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the 11th of November, is often called Martinmas; and never is the sun thought to shine more benignly than on this day, which is in the season of our lovely Indian summer.



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SAINT CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA.

THE setting sun of an African November, in the year of our Lord 307, flooded the city of Alexandria with a glory more of heaven than of earth, as two Greeks of the Musæum walked, side by side, the length of the noble porticoes where the philosophers and scholars of all nations, for six hundred years, had delighted to breathe the evening air as it floated in from the Mediterranean sea. Around them lay the gardens of this royal seat of learning. Within sight rose the Pharos, or light-house of white marble, on which fires were constantly kept burning to guide the sailors into the great harbor. More majestic still, rose before them, encrusted with the gorgeously-veined marbles of tropical quarries, the temple of the god Serapis, on whose feast-day the holy evangelist, Saint Mark, had been dragged, more than two hundred years before, along the paved streets of the idolatrous and wicked city, to be left outside the gates to die. By a succession of events too extraordinary for any but the divine eye to foresee, this Alexandria, this seat of pagan philosophy, had also become a centre of Christian doctrine, Christian morality and of the profoundest Christian learning. Paganism struggled fiercely with its supernatural conqueror, and even when vanquished in fair scholastic combat, never deigned to acknowledge its defeat.

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A new challenge had been flung out to the Christians of Alexandria in the course of the persecutions set on foot by the Roman emperor, Maximin, and it was this challenge which the two learned Greeks, Myron and Caranus, were discussing. "What new freak is this which the brute Maximin has imposed upon the grave philosophers of the schools? To be called to meet a Christian scholar, if there be one, would be insulting enough; but to spend time and learning upon a woman, a mere girl, I am told, as well as a Christian!"

"You must remember," replied Myron, "that the lady Catherine is a princess, and that the eyes of the Alexandrians will see the least flaw in the proceedings against her. You must also remember that she is a princess of extraordinary learning and even respected for this as much as for her virtue, by every philosopher in Alexandria. You must also remember her exceeding beauty, the acknowledged grace and dignity of her manners; and, finally, it is known that the emperor hopes to possess this jewel to strengthen his power in Alexandria. Here are reasons, more than enough, to induce the tyrant Maximin to summon the wisdom of the schools to aid him in breaking down the faith of a Christian maiden like the princess Catherine."

"You speak like a Christian," said Caranus, "or as if you might soon be one."

"Not an actual Christian, I think; for I have remarked that there is needed, to convert a person to this sect, something more than a good natured respect for the personal virtues of Christians, or even an intellectual assent to some of their doctrines. There is needed, in truth, that *divine enthusiasm* upon which Plato depends when he speaks to us through his inspired dialogues, and which might well be the gift of the gods."

"Beware, Myron, how you enter the lists against the lady Catherine; you are, already, ripe to her hand. For myself, I scorn her royalty as I do her beauty. I set at nought her boasted

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learning, looking upon her, as I do upon every other Christian, with contempt. The emperor has chosen a way to add to the ignominy of her condemnation, rather than a way of escape. Stubborn and incapable of reasoning, she will not yield, as he vainly hopes, but will die; not as the princess Catherine, but as a girl who lost her wits when she became a Christian."

Catherine was, in truth, the very flower of the Alexandrian nobility. At the age of eighteen she was a prodigy of learning, for she had been educated at the feet of the successors of Pantænus of Alexandria and of his disciple, Saint Clement. It was their custom to teach their scholars, first, what was good in the heathen philosophy and then to lead them by degrees to Christianity, which they embraced all the more readily when they found it to contain not only all they most admired in the best pagan writings, but truths too sublime for the unaided mind of man to have discovered. In this way, the tender virgin of Alexandria had read the *Conversations of Socrates* and the *Dialogues of Plato*, and knew, by heart, the *Books of the Sibyls;* while this secular learning was crowned by the enlightenment of Christian doctrine and the loveliness of Christian devotion. When the emperor Maximin began his persecution of the Alexandrian Christians, Catherine stepped forward and was not afraid to throw her rank, her learning, and her eloquence, on the side of the oppressed Church. Maximin was awed by her fervor, and impressed by her beauty. He did not wish to throw her to the lions nor to give her to the flames; but he said: "The wise men of the schools, whom I despise as much as they can despise me, shall, for once, do me a service, and win this beautiful Egyptian for me, since I cannot win her for myself." The morning after Myron and Caranus had made their evening stroll together, was the one appointed for Catherine to meet the philosophers summoned by the emperor. When she entered the grand hall where she was to confront this array of pagan wisdom, it was not as a

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princess in all the glory of her royal attendance, nor even as a noble Alexandrian. She had been taken, not from her palace, but from a prison; and her beauty, which was the boast of her native city, was unaided by a single vestige of rank or of opulence. She stood before them simply as a Christian maiden, her hair knotted on the back of her head, the white robe of woolen stuff, high at the throat and touching the wrists, confined by a simple belt around a figure almost girlish in its slenderness.* Her eyes were not cast down, but had all that openness of true modesty, which meets whatever it is called upon by God to face, with unshrinking courage. For once, the sophistry of the pagan philosophers was off its guard. Here was no weak woman to be intimidated, overawed; no woman vain of her learning, to be trapped by the subtlety of words. It was plain that those clear, candid eyes saw farther than those of the oldest philosopher among them, and although they had replied to the imperial summons: "Place her, oh Cæsar, before us, that her folly and rash ness may be exposed to all the people;" at the sight of her, the whole assembly made an involuntary movement of respect, not excepting Caranus. Each philosopher carried his roll under his robe; but no manuscript was concealed in the narrow sleeves of the lady Catherine's tunic. Had a Christian been present, he would have seen that she had thrown herself on the promise made by our Lord, when he said: "But when they shall deliver you up, be not anxious how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what to speak." The emperor said to her in his blandest tones: "We have sent for you, lady Catherine, as one capable of reason and of fair judgment, that you may receive from these learned men whatever is necessary to fix your mind in the reverence due to the gods. Too much study

*See an outline of Masaccio's fresco in the church of Saint Clement, Rome, in Kugler's Handbook. In the fresco the dress is a dull blue.

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and the fancies natural to your age and sex, have bred in you this unbelief towards the gods of your country. Listen, then, to these great teachers, and return to your friends, to the honors and pleasures suited to your rank."

"The Church of Christ," calmly replied Catherine, "being my teacher, what can I have to ask concerning false gods even from the philosophers of Alexandria?"

For an instant every plan of attack was overthrown by the courage and directness of her confession of faith. Caranus, however, recovering from his first astonishment and resolved, for Myron's sake, to give no place for hesitation, said to her in his severest manner: "Tell us, then, since you have nothing to ask, how one so young could have dared to despise the gods of her nation, and, listening to new teachers, have set at naught the ancient learning of the schools?"

"Is it a philosopher of Athens who asks me this question? Did not Socrates and Plato, whose disciple you claim to be, acknowledge, as the crowning glory of all wisdom and the fruit of all solid learning, a belief in the one, supreme God, from whom they declared all other existences to have had their being? Having acknowledged this, how is it possible to pay divine honors to any others? That one God whom they were proud to acknowledge as philosophers, but dared not serve as Greeks, alone do I adore. Miserable are they who place their faith where they can neither find help in the moment of danger, nor comfort in the hour of tribulation!"

"But who is this Christ," asked Myron, "in whose school you have learned to practice what Socrates and Plato taught?"

"The second person of the most holy Trinity—a trinity of which Plato did not even dream, although an echo seems to have come to him of that mystery of mysteries, which the angels of heaven adore, while they cannot comprehend—in whom dwelt all the fullness of the God-head bodily; that Christ who was the

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son of God, yet, also, the son of man, the son of Mary; that mysterious being of whom the Sibyls spoke in those oracles which you quote without understanding; that king, who was born in a stable and died upon a cross, but who rules the world and the kingdoms thereof, and who shall, one day, come in his glory to judge both the living and the dead!"

The slender fore-finger which had touched, at first, one after another, the tips of the five fingers on her left hand, as if demonstrating some grand proposition, now suddenly relaxed; both hands met adoringly, and the eyes, hitherto so calm, were raised to heaven in an ecstacy of worship! The *divine enthusiasm* of which Myron had spoken, ran, "like a spark among the reeds," through the ranks of those venerable philosophers! Long slumbering desires for truth, half stifled sighs for that immortality of which all had dreamed, suddenly took the place of doubt. Should this mere girl lay hold of, and bear off, what every one before her knew to be the summing up of all learning, the crown, as she had said, of all wisdom, and they be left to wander in the twilight of anticipation? Not one of those forty philosophers, ranged under the eye of the tyrant Maximin, could tell how the light had broken in upon his darkness; but under that strong grace the last shadow of paganism vanished, as the night before the morning sun. The emperor was forgotten, and the clear voice of Cather ine was alone heard, until Maximin, rousing from his stupor of amazement, roared out: "Dolts and idiots, have I brought you here to betray me? Sacrifice to the gods, or, by the thunderbolts of Jupiter, you shall burn like the Christians!" Then it was that these great scholars proved themselves to be great indeed; for, in the very presence of the emperor, they declared themselves Christians, ready, also to suffer as Christians. No time was lost. The imperial clemency which had been shown to Catherine avenged itself upon the forty philosophers. The royal virgin saw them delivered to the flames, while she was sent back

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to her dungeon with this order, hissed out between the tyrant's teeth: "Starve her to death." With this infamous sentence on his lips, the enraged emperor departed upon some expedition of war and slaughter.

The command of the emperor was literally obeyed, and the lady Catherine was left, as they supposed, to all the horrors of a death of starvation. Eleven days, however, after the door of her dungeon had been closed, never to open upon her alive, the jailor tremblingly put his key into the lock, turned it. The heavy door swung on its hingers, and there sat the lady Catherine, not even wasted, but radiant with a beauty which blinded the eyes and converted the heart of the jailer! He could only fall on his knees and pray to the "God of the Christians." The news of this miracle spread like wild-fire through the palace. The empress, with Porphyry the head of all the emperor's forces, and two hundred attendants, came to visit Catherine in her dungeon, filled, as it was, with fragrance and with light. No sooner did they see this truly celestial maiden, than they fell to the floor, and when she spoke to them, they could only answer: "We too are Christians!"

When Maximin returned to Alexandria he was seized with fury, and commanded the empress, Porphyry, and all the other converts, to be put to a cruel death. Yet so blinded was this unhappy man, that, after all this, he said to Catherine: "The empress is dead, you shall be my empress and the mistress of the world, if you will but give up this hated name of Christian."

To this monstrous attempt at sacrilege Catherine could only reply: "Shall I forsake my Heavenly Spouse, glorious in his immortal beauty, to unite myself with thee who art base-born, wicked and deformed?"

At hearing this Maximin roared like a lion. Sending for his engineers he commanded them to make four wheels, armed with sharp points and blades, two revolving in one direction and two

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in another. Among these glittering points, hardly to be counted for number, Catherine was to be placed in such a way, that as the wheels revolved with the speed of lightning, her tender body would be cut into ten thousand pieces. The holy maid instantly prepared herself for this awful death. But when the time came, and she was walking between her armed guards, her heart, lifted up above all fear of torments and wholly intent upon the glory of her divine Lord, she prayed thus: "Let not thine enemies, oh Lord, prevail over me, but change these wheels into a glorious testimony to thy power and to thy justice!" No sooner had the executioners bound her to the wheel—wheel within a wheel—than fire came down from heaven, broke the wheel into a thousand pieces, and sent the burning fragments, like missiles of destruction, among the crowd. But while she stood under the blue African sky, the only one unharmed among the awe-struck, terrified multitude, Maximin, frothing at the mouth with his inhuman madness, called out: "Beat her with rods and behead her with the sword!" which God suffered them to do, and took the soul of this holy maid to himself.

The Christians, hearing of Catherine's glorious confession, were on the watch, and immediately gathered around the lifeless body to secure the precious blood and relics of the martyr and virgin. In those days, when the flame of devotion was fanned by the whirlwind of persecution, the dress of the religious was called the "Angelical habit." To the hands of these holy religious was committed the body of the blessed Catherine, and, by them it was reverently carried to the convent on Mount Sinai, where it was kept with singular affection. In the poetical language of those Eastern nations, she was said to have been carried to her tomb on Mount Sinai *by angels;* and hence those pictures of Saint Catherine, in which she is seen borne through the air by these friends, each one vested in the beautiful garments of the brotherhood of heaven; one bearing her

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palm, another the sword by which her spirit was released from the bondage of earth. In all other pictures, Saint Catherine of Alexandria is known by the broken wheel at her side.

The Church joyfully celebrates her triumph on the 25th day of November.



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SAINT BARBARA.

IN that old Egyptian city called Heliopolis, or the City of the Sun, there was a magnificent temple. This temple was dedicated to the worship of the sun; but ranged along its beautiful walls were to be seen statues of those gods most in favor with the people. Greek artists were called upon to adorn all the great cities of northern Africa in those days; so that Greek art was to be found in Alexandria and in Heliopolis in nearly as great perfection as in Athens itself.

One day Dioscorus of Heliopolis, who was distinguished even among the citizens of this opulent city for his great wealth and for the nobility of his birth, was walking through this temple of the sun with his young daughter Barbara. With the kindness so natural to a father, he was pointing out to her the wonders of the great temple; and among these wonders, the long lines of statues that adorned the walls were far from being considered the least. As Dioscorus came to each of them, he told little Barbara its name, and something of its story. After a while the child said: "Did you not say, my father, that these statues are gods? But you are telling me the story of men and women like ourselves."

"Hush!" said her father, "be careful how you speak thus. They are gods and to be adored."

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The child said no more, but walked with her father the whole length and breadth of the temple, seeing all its wonders and beauties with the quick eye of childhood. But the question which had been roused in her mind could not be put to sleep. Again and again she said to herself: "If these gods were once men and women, who could not defend themselves from sorrow or mishaps, and who were no better, indeed, not so good as ourselves, how is it that they must now be adored?"

Heliopolis was celebrated for its learned men, and learning added lustre to the titles of the noble-born. In such an atmosphere, learned women are never uncommon. Dioscorus was no exception to the rule of learning, and he took pains to have his daughter well taught from her earliest years. Indeed, when he saw the beauty of this child first budding forth, he could think of no one, even in cultivated Heliopolis, whom he thought worthy of her. All the young men of noble families were as wicked as they were learned and polished. He was not displeased, therefore, when he found that Barbara loved study more than she loved society; and he gave her everything she asked for in the way of books. One of the high towers of his castle was fitted up for her use. There she studied the sciences known to the ancients, and the philosophy and poetry of Greece. But the soul of Barbara was not satisfied. What did these sciences tell that was worth all her study and pains, since the Creator of this wonderful world of which science treated, was nowhere revealed? What did the philosophers discourse of that could give her happiness, since they declared themselves only seekers of wisdom and truth, ever seeking for what they had never found, and never expected to find? What consolation could she draw from the poets, whose sole business it was to magnify gods and goddesses who practiced vices which the more virtuous of the pagans would blush to call their own? When she looked forth from her high tower at early morning, she could see the sun rising

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near the tall obelisk east of the city, covered with hieroglyphics that told the history of her country and the worship of its gods. As she looked forth from the same high tower at evening, she saw the same burning sun setting behind the three mighty pyramids that stood in a cluster beyond the Nile, towards the west, and towards the vast Libyan Desert. "The one who created that sun must be greater than the sun itself!" Barbara would say, as she watched the last rays disappear behind the low hills on the horizon. "Why, then, do we worship the sun, instead of him who created it?" And from this time she directed her worship towards the Creator of all things. She held in contempt those idols of wood and of stone, however beautiful as works of art, which were adored by her countrymen, and she sighed unceasingly for the unknown God, the Creator. At this time, as if in answer to her prayers, a learned guest at her father's table remarked: "Every one who comes from Alexandria is talking of Origen, that wonderful scholar and Christian philosopher. The time has gone by when the Christians can be looked upon as ignorant or contemptible. This Origen is said to prove the existence of one Supreme God, Creator of all things, by arguments known and approved by all philosophers. If Origen prevails, our ancient worship is overthrown."

"The more learned these Christians become," replied Dioscorus, "the more worthy they may appear of respect, the more dangerous they will prove. Instead of showing them lenity, we ought to deal sharp and swift vengeance on these defamers of the gods!" continued Dioscorus, in an excited voice.

"If Origen carries the Alexandrians with him," returned his guest, "Christianity triumphs."

"Origen may carry the Alexandrian philosophers with him," broke in Dioscorus, "but he will not find the emperors so easily persuaded. It will need something more than good logic to induce them to turn from the old beaten paths of conquest.

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Again, I say, let us try the rack and the sword on these Christians, if there is no better answer to be given to their sound logic."

The dinner broke up with this animated discussion of things in Alexandria. Barbara retired, as usual, to her tower and to her books, but she could not fix her mind upon her studies. For the first time she saw a way opening to a knowledge of the one true, eternal God. Acting under the inspiration of this unknown Being, to whom her whole heart and mind lay open like a fair page ready to receive the words of heavenly wisdom and instruction, she had soon decided what to do. "I will write," she said, "to this Christian philosopher, to this Origen;" and immediately took her style and a sheet of papyrus, and began her epistle. For a moment she hesitated; for what was she but a mere girl, and Origen was one who stood before the whole world not only as a philosopher, but as a teacher of philosophers. "But if he is really great," she said to herself, "he will not regard so much the littleness of the one who writes, as the greatness of her question; for am I not asking him to teach me the way to the one true God?" Then she applied herself to her task, writing thus: "To Origen of Alexandria, whose glory is spread abroad, I, Barbara of Heliopolis, thy handmaid, wish thee to lead me to the knowledge of the true God. From the first dawn of reason I have felt in my heart the most ardent desire to come to this knowledge, for I have always thought that the Divinity could not reside in mere images, the work of men's hands, incapable of hearing or speaking. Man is born, and he also dies; but God can have neither beginning nor end. In this God, who is unknown to me but who must have created all things, I have put all my confidence. Him alone do I love, and I will spare myself nothing in order to come to a true knowledge of him. The fame of thy wisdom and learning has reached even me, and I hope that thou

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wilt deign to make known to me this knowledge which thou art teaching to the wise in Alexandria."

Having written her letter, she cast about in her mind for a proper messenger. After much thought she decided upon an old and most faithful servant, who was often sent to Alexandria on business. By the time this happened again, she had engaged the assistance of the faithful servant; her letter was not only taken to Alexandria, but given into the hands of Origen himself. This messenger found the great Christian philosopher, whose fame was in the mouth of the learned from Rome to Heliopolis, in the palace of Mammea, the mother of the emperor, to whom he was preaching the doctrine of Jesus Christ. It was with all the joy of an apostle that he read Barbara's letter. The simplicity of this young girl, leading the life of a recluse in a tower of her father's castle, surrounded by idolators, nursed in a pagan philosophy, learned in pagan science and familiar only with pagan poets and a pagan art, touched Origen's large, generous soul with a profound respect and sympathy, and this was his reply to her letter: "Origen, unworthy priest of Jesus Christ, and sometimes his preacher and living in Alexandria, to Barbara, of the race of the Gentiles, but called, by adoption, to be one of the children of God, and of Jesus Christ: I will now teach thee, according to thy wishes, concerning the true God. Know, then, that he is one in substance, but three in person, viz., the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To come to God, to know him, we must believe in this doctrine. Let faith, then, complete whatever is lacking in the desire of thy heart towards God. Consult my messenger. He will instruct thee in the whole law of God, and he will read to thee out of holy books which he will take with him to Heliopolis. No doubt great torments lie in wait for thee because of Jesus Christ; for he said to his disciples: 'He that will lose his life in this world for my sake shall keep it unto life eternal.'"

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Very soon after the return of her own messenger, Origen sent one of his disciples to instruct Barbara. When she was told that a scholar and physician had arrived from Alexandria, she ordered that he should be admitted immediately. When her father saw her eagerness to see this stranger, he was alarmed; and as soon as he saw him, asked bluntly: "Upon what errand have you come to my daughter?" The Alexandrian replied: "I am learned in the science of medicine, and my master is one who cures souls." This answer, which was according to the manner of the times, satisfied Dioscorus, and the stranger, whose name was Valentine, was allowed to see Barbara. He saluted her in the name of Jesus Christ, and immediately began his instructions, at her request. As soon as Valentine found that Barbara had an intelligent belief in the Christian doctrines, he baptized her in the same tower in which she had spent her life of study and meditation. When he returned to Alexandria, he left with her the sacred books which he brought with him. The ardor with which she studied them and the spirit of prayer which accompanied her reading, enabled her to make wonderful progress in the science of divine things.

At this time, Dioscorus decided to add another tower to his castle, and gave orders to his workmen concerning it. Before it was far advanced, however, he took a journey. Barbara watched the tower growing higher and higher every day, until it came to the windows. When she saw the workmen leaving two spaces for the windows, a thought struck her. This thought must have been an inspiration, since the consequences of it were so weighty. "If, instead of two windows, they had put three," said Barbara, "these windows would be a symbol of the Holy Trinity!" This thought would not leave her mind; and signing herself in the name of the Holy Trinity, she finally went down from her own tower to the workmen below, saying to them: "Why have you put in but two windows?"

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"Because your father directed us to do so," replied the masons.

"The tower looks unfinished, with only two windows. Add still another, and have three."

"Believe me, lady," said the master workman, "I would willingly do as you say, but I fear your father's anger on his return, should he find three windows instead of two."

"Do as I have said," returned Barbara, "and I will see that you are not blamed."

The window was made as Barbara had requested: and on the side of the tower, towards the east, she laid a cross with her own hands, in brick and mortar. The tower was quite finished when Dioscorus returned from his journey. He discovered, immediately, that three windows had been built instead of two, as he had ordered; and he called out angrily to the workmen: "Did I not tell you to build two windows in the tower?"

"Certainly," replied the master-builder; "but your daughter urged me so much to put in the third window, that I could not refuse her."

"And why, my child," said Dioscorus, turning to Barbara, "why did you insist upon having three windows in the new tower instead of two?"

"I have good reasons for acting thus," replied Barbara; "for know, my father, that three windows enlighten the whole soul of man."

"Why three windows more than two?" persistently asked her father.

"There are three," said Barbara, "who illuminate the world and rule the course of the stars; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one."

At this answer, her father was so enraged that he drew his sword to kill her, forgetting all the tenderness of his love for this cherished daughter. No doubt Barbara believed that she would

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gain the ear of her father, and thus sow the seed of Christian faith in his heart. But his hatred of Christians had been indulged against all the light which his learning and intercourse with the world should have given him; and now, when he heard these Christian doctrines from the lips of his daughter, he forgot everything in this unholy hatred. But the sword was cheated of its prey, and Barbara escaped from her father as if by a miracle. Leaving the castle, she found her way among the mountains where shepherds led their flocks for green pasturage. Dioscorus, urged on by an insane fury, pursued her. One good shepherd, seeing the anger expressed in his countenance, kept silence when Dioscorus asked the group of shepherds if they had seen a young girl flying along the mountain roads. But another pointed out, with his finger, the path which Barbara had taken. No sooner did Dioscorus find her within his grasp, than he struck her with his clenched hands, dragged her home by her long hair, and loaded her with chains. Thrusting her into the castle dungeon, he went himself to denounce her to Marcian, the pro-consul, as a Christian. Marcian ordered Dioscorus to lead her before the tribunal; but no sooner did Marcian behold this young girl, in all the nobleness of her beauty, and all the modesty of her intelligence, than he desired to shield her from the anger of this unjust father. "Save yourself, child, from your father's indignation, by sacrificing to the gods! Otherwise there is nothing before you but a death of torment."

"I desire not the miserable safety you offer to me," said Barbara; "instead of this, I most earnestly desire to offer myself in sacrifice to my Lord Jesus Christ, *who made heaven and earth and all that in them is.* As to the demons you adore, the prophet has said: *They have mouths and speak not; they have eyes and see see not; and those who adore them are like unto them.*"

The pro-consul was furious when he heard this answer. There was no longer any desire to shield her from her father or the law.

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He ordered her clothing to be stripped from her back, and she was scourged with leathern whips; then, while her body was still drenched with blood, she was led to the prison until he could decide what further tortures to inflict upon her. But that Jesus, to whom she had boldly given testimony without regard to her own flesh, was not one to forget her in her great need. In the middle of the night, as she lay on the floor of her dungeon, an outcast from her father's house and from her father's heart, a great light suddenly shone about her, and from the midst of the brightness stepped forth a being all majesty and yet all love. Barbara knew it could be no other than Jesus Christ himself who had thus come to visit her. Wounded and bleeding as she was, she rose from the floor and bowed herself before him in the fullness of adoration and of gratitude. How light seemed the lashes which had been endured for him! How poor and small the sacrifice which had been made for such a Lord and such a Master! But when he spoke, Barbara could not think herself anywhere but in heaven! "Take courage, my daughter! There will be great joy in heaven, as well as upon earth, over thy torments. Do not fear the tyrant, nor his power. I am with thee to preserve thee from all that can really harm thee." The celestial voice ceased; the celestial brightness faded from the dungeon; but the soul of Barbara had been lifted, forever, above mortal love or mortal fear.

In the morning the prisoner was led before the pro-consul. Seeing that she bore no traces of the cruel lashes given to her the day before, and perhaps feeling ashamed of his base inhumanity, he said to Barbara: "Surely the gods love thee, and are lenient to thee, for they have healed thy wounds." But Barbara replied: "Thy gods are mere blocks—deaf, blind and dumb; how, then, could they heal me? He who has healed me is Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, whom thou seest not because Satan has hardened thy heart." At these words, spoken with

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calm distinctness, Marcian foamed at the mouth like a raging lion. "Bring your torches!" he cried out to the executioners; "burn her sides! Tear her breasts! Break her skull with a mallet!"

The martyr stretched her young hands to heaven, and sighed forth, rather than spoke. *Lord, cast me not forth from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me!* When they tore her clothing from her, she sighed forth again: *Thou, Lord, art my ever-present Helper!* Oh, thou who coverest the heavens with thy clouds, cover me from the eyes of the impious!"

Then it was that the pro-consul, whose fury and whose cruelty seemed to have exhausted itself, ordered them to behead her. Then, too, it was, that the virgin martyr lifted up her whole soul to her divine spouse, as if beginning on earth that intercession which she would continue in heaven, praying thus: "Lord Jesus, whom all things obey, grant that all those who invoke thy Holy Name in memory of me, may find their sins forgotten on the Day of Judgment!" And these words had no sooner fallen from her lips than the sword severed her head from her body. The Church of God, which has numbered Saint Barbara among the virgin martyrs ever since the year of our Lord 235, still remembers this dying prayer of the saint. Saint Barbara is still invoked in behalf of the dying, and no one who has asked her assistance in securing the last sacraments has been disappointed. Saint Stanislaus Kostka invoked her under circumstances which cut him off from human aid, and the holy youth was allowed to receive the Bread of Life at the hands of angels.

In that famous picture which is the glory of the Dresden Gallery, called sometimes the *Sistine*, and sometimes the *Dresden Madonna*, the last Madonna ever painted by Raphael, Saint Sixtus is seen kneeling on one side of the Blessed Virgin and her Divine Child, and Saint Barbara on the other side, as if the great artist would secure her prayers for his own hour of death, which

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was so near. Engravings from this picture can be seen in almost any picture store; but there are other pictures of Saint Barbara, and especially one by Matteo of Siena, painted in 1479, which we could study with great pleasure and with an increase of devotion. She is generally known by the tower with its three windows, which is held in her hand or is very near her. Sometimes, too, she is known by the chalice and wafer, as one who secures the sacraments for the dying. In the picture by Matteo of Siena, she is seated on a chair of state. An angel stands on each side of her, playing on a stringed instrument. Above her are two angels, who are bringing to her the heavenly crown. In her right hand she carries the martyr's palm, while her left supports on her knee the tower with its three windows, and within its portal are placed the sacramental chalice and the shining host.

The Church celebrates her martyrdom and her patronage on the 4th day of December. Is there one in all Christendom who would not wish to secure the assistance of Saint Barbara at the hour of death?



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SAINT NICHOLAS.

WHAT child, in all Christendom, does not feel his heart jump at the thought of Saint Nicholas and of his next Christmas visit? Every toy-shop and candy-shop has a Saint Nicholas—a Santa Claus—for its window; and no fairy tale is more delightfully mysterious, more charmingly bewildering to a youthful fancy, than the story told from age to age before the blazing logs in the huge fire-places of cottages nested away among the mountains and pine forests of the old world, and in the baronial halls where lords and retainers kept the pious vigil and fast of Christmas Eve; down to our own times, when song and rhyme and merriment celebrate, beside snug chimneys and blazing grates, the Christmas visits of Saint Nicholas to the poor as well as to the rich.

Dear Saint Nicholas! to how many is he the only saint allowed in the family calendar; the only saint whom the little ones are allowed to invoke! The great apostles, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, in such households, are merely Peter and Paul; and the "beloved disciple" is merely John; but Saint Nicholas! who ever thought of robbing him of his halo, or of the blessed prefix to his name?

But I hear a voice, or rather two voices; one a high soprano, clear and tinkling as the merriest sleigh bells in winter; the other

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low, and almost solemn in its softness; two young voices, and they make a pretty duet as they ask, in that country home guarded from the northwest winds by tall trees, glittering with hoar frost and ice, as if cased in jewels: "But was Nicholas a true saint? Was he, really, *Saint* Nicholas? It is to answer this question, put by the two voices in one breath, that I write the story, the true story, of Nicholas of Myra; that same Myra of Lycia in Asia Minor, in which Saint Paul planted the Christian faith; and I will leave to each of my young readers to decide, whether our Christmas Nicholas deserves the halo and the title of a true saint.

At Pataral, in this same province of Lycia and only three miles from Myra, was born, in the last half of the third century, a son to a noble Christian house. The child had been asked of God with many prayers, and so perfectly had the practice of holy precept been transmitted to him by his saintly parents, that no sooner did he know how to feed than he knew how to fast; for on Wednesdays and Fridays, as on all the days consecrated to fasting by the Church, he would take the breast of his mother but once. As he grew in body and in mind, he kept all the innocence of his first years. It was said, ages ago, by an eloquent Dominican monk, who loved the young and who founded upon them his most beautiful hopes for the Church of God in his country: "A child who has been kept without sin until after coming to the age of reason and to the use of his own will, acquires such a purity of mind and heart, that the angels of heaven often come to converse with him." This would seem to have been true of the only child of that noble house in Lycia; for, so angelic was the purity of his manners, so habitual was his love for the poor, so perfect was his obedience and so tender was his piety, that his parents could not do otherwise than offer this child to the service of God in the ministry of the altar. At an early

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age he was taken to the monastery of Sion, near Myra, there to be perfected in the science of sanctity.

Our Nicholas was still very young when his father and mother both died of the plague, leaving him the sole heir to their vast possessions. But so far was he from regarding these riches as a means of securing his independence, or as dispensing him from rigorous duties, that he believed himself bound by one more heavy obligation; which was, to act like a wise steward of the treasure of God. The ears of the young monk, then abbot in the monastery of Sion, were closed indeed to the worldly news of the city whose spires were in sight, but open to every tale of distress brought to the good monks; and we shall see how promptly he acted when necessity pressed upon his fellow mortals.

In the city of Myra was a nobleman who had been very rich, but had become very poor; so poor that he could no longer keep up the state becoming to his house; so poor that he actually suffered from want of food and the common comforts of life. But this was not the greatest sorrow of the once rich nobleman, now become poor. He might have borne poverty himself, but how could this tender-hearted father bear to have three lovely daughters growing every day thinner and paler and sadder before his eyes? The three young girls, seeing the distress of their father, and realizing how much it was increased by his love for them, would not complain, but night after night, retiring to their apartment, would together commend themselves to the ever blessed Trinity; to Mary, the mother of all Christians; to the angels and the saints in heaven, and then fall asleep with tears upon their patient cheeks. Time brought no relief, but rather increasing poverty; and this family, unaccustomed to labor, unaccustomed to hardship, became every day more wretched in its helplessness. While sorrow and misfortune had made these poor girls more fervent in piety, that confidence in God which had

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been so easy a virtue to the father in his days of prosperity, seemed to have forsaken him; and prayer, the only means of keeping alive this holy confidence, had become a stranger to his heart and to his lips. He forgot to raise his thoughts to God, and despondency took possession of his mind. As evening drew on, unable to bear the darkness that fell with it upon his once cheerful mansion, he would pace silently to and fro in the walks of his garden; its terraces no longer gay with flowers nor its orange and fig-trees laden with fruit, but desolate and neglected. As hour after hour passed by, and the moon, which had shed a soft and consoling light over its desolation, set behind the tall cypresses, his despondency would deepen, and he would sit down on the cold turf to groan aloud with the anguish that consumed him. Not until midnight, and even later, could he bring himself to enter the house and seek a few hours of troubled sleep. The spirits of evil care not how we lose heaven. To them it is all the same, whether we lose it by committing one great crime or by a simple persistence in the neglect of saving graces, whether by a rash confidence or by a rash despair. They were, therefore, quite content to see the poor nobleman giving himself up to melancholy, waiting for the time to whisper in his ear the terrible thought, which, if acted upon, would change his blameless suffering into mortal sin.

One night he had paced the damp walks of the garden later than usual. The moon went down early behind the tall cypresses, behind the beautiful hills that swept around the old city of Myra like a wall on which the angels could pause and keep guard over the sleeping town. The chill of the dark midnight crept through his threadbare garments, crept through his very soul, when, like a flash of lurid fire, a terrible thought passed through his mind: "Why should they die of starvation while wicked people are living in luxury? Could they not be wicked also, and—" Horrified, he turned from the garden as if its deep shadows had sent

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the temptation into his mind; but he forgot to sign himself with that sign of salvation before which every spirit of evil trembles and flies. He forgot, too, the prayer he had learned as a child, for the moment of temptation; and it was not until he breathed the same air as his daughters in their innocent sleep—the air made holy by their faith in God and their practices of piety—that the terrible thought lost its hold on his imagination. The next morning the girls rose languidly, looked mournfully at each other, and the oldest one said: "Let us pray to him who hears the ravens when they cry, for he alone can save us. Some evil, more dreadful than hunger, lies in wait for us. What it is, I cannot say; but an awful foreboding came over me last night as I heard our father lamenting in the garden. Let us pray, my sisters, as the Lord Jesus has taught us to pray, that we may be delivered from this great evil." When the scanty meal that was to break their morning fast had been prepared, they called their father, who saluted his daughters as tenderly as ever, but without looking them in the face; and such an expression of utter despair rested on his venerable features, that they no longer dared to look at him. When night came, they could not say their accustomed prayers together, so great was their terror. Each one made her supplication to God, and implored the assistance of the heavenly powers, in the silence of her own heart, while the disconsolate father again took up his lamentation in the garden. From his broken sentences, it seemed that the temptation had returned with the darkness, though he still resisted it; for, again and again, he groaned: "No! no! not a life of shame! Starvation, but not sin!" Then continued his walk in the desolate garden, not returning to his apartment until after midnight.

The moon had dropped behind the cypresses that bounded the garden of the poor nobleman, behind the mountains that stood around the city, behind even the chestnut groves that crowned the gentle slopes of the monastery of Sion. Only the

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stars shone bright on their high thrones in the stillness of the night, when a tall figure, young and graceful, with a step as light as an angel's,and one attendant, passed noiselessly through the gate of the monastery where all the brothers were sleeping, ready to obey the first bell for matins. Swiftly the tall figure glided over the mountain road; so swiftly that the attendant could scarcely keep pace with it. Swiftly, too, it glided through the narrow, unlighted streets of Myra, until it stood before the house of the poor nobleman, stood below the high, square window of the apartment to which he had but just returned; stood there listening to the low moans within, then rose lightly on the tips of its slender feet, balanced itself as if for some quick movement, listened until it heard a heavy thump on the floor within, then turned as swiftly as before on its way through the narrow, unlighted streets, over the mountain road, until it disappeared within the shadow beyond the monastery gate.

Roused by the heavy thump on his bare floor, the nobleman was at first terrified; but finding the succeeding silence unbroken, he struck a light with the two flints always at hand, took up what he saw on the floor, and gave a cry of surprise and of joy that awakened his daughters. Together they untied a round bag filled with gold pieces, which, on counting, they found amounted exactly to the usual marriage portion of a noble lady. "See! my child," said the fond father to his eldest daughter, "see! here is a marriage portion suiting thy rank, and worthy of thy virtues. Ah! my child, little canst thou understand the deliverance brought to thee by this bag of precious gold."

"Angels must have brought it," exclaimed the three girls.

"Yes, yes, my good children," and then the old shadow came over his face, "but only for one; as for you, my two portionless darlings——" and he began to weep.

"Take courage, dear father, God is too good for us to distrust

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him;" and the innocent girls would have been perfectly happy but for this shadow on the face of their beloved father. The next night no tears were on their happy cheeks as they sank into a slumber full of confidence in the divine goodness; but the poor nobleman again walked in his garden, again lamented, and did not approach his room until midnight. Again, too, the tall young figure, with a step as light as an angel's, and one attendant, passed noiselessly through the gate of the old Asian monastery of Sion; passed swiftly along the mountain road and through the narrow, unlighted streets of the city of Myra, until it stood below the nobleman's house, and below the high, square window of his apartment. Again, too, the tall figure stood as if listening to the low moans within; then balancing itself on the tips of the slender feet, made the same swift movement with the right arm, paused to hear the heavy thump on the bare floor, and returned, at even a swifter pace, through the narrow, unlighted streets, over the mountain road, to disappear among the shadows within the monastery gate.

Again, too, the poor nobleman was not only roused, but startled, as if by a supernatural sound, when the round bag, closely tied, fell to the bare floor, and a sense of shame and utter unworthiness came over him: "How had he deserved this second visit of God's angel? And why had not his impious complaints thwarted the prayers of his faithful children?" This time it was an exclamation of remorse that awakened his daughters. The light was struck, and together they opened the bag, counting again, in gold, the exact marriage portion for a noble lady. Touched, not only in his heart but in his conscience, the nobleman embraced his second daughter, saying: "See, my child! God is merciful to thee in spite of thy poor father; but what remains for thee, my youngest darling;" and here he broke into tears and sighs. His children embraced him tenderly, beseeching him not to return

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the generosity of heaven with such a lack of confidence; and the youngest one, especially, endeavored by her cheerfulness and even gayety over the happiness of her sisters, to win him from his melancholy. They succeeded so far that he did not leave the house when the evening came on, nor did he walk in the gloomy paths of the deserted garden. As midnight approached, and he heard the light breathing of the innocent sleepers, tears stole gently down his worn cheeks, and for the first time in many weeks he bent his knees in prayer.

Is it a step which he hears on the walk outside? His heart beats loud, and that very instant a small, round bag flies through the window! He does not stop to take it up, but running eagerly to the door, sees the tall, graceful figure before it turns from the window, seizes it by the long robe, and cries: "Tell me, art thou an angel or a mortal?" Then discovering the monk's cowl and scapular; recognizing, too, the beautiful young face of the holy abbot of Sion, he exclaims: "O, Nicholas, servant of God! why seek to hide thyself?" and he kissed the hands and the very feet of his benefactor in the fullness of his pious gratitude. Nicholas laid his hand in benediction on the poor nobleman's head, saying mildly: "Live in peace; tell no man what has befallen thee;" and, disengaging himself from the nobleman's grasp, passed swiftly back through the silent, unlighted streets, along the mountain road and beneath the grand chestnut groves, until he disappeared among the shadows within the gate of the monastery.

"O, Nicholas must really have been Saint Nicholas!" exclaimed the two young voices in one breath; "and now we understand that beautiful engraving from Raphael over the mantel-piece in the south parlor; where, beside our Blessed Lady and her Divine Son on their throne under the rich canopy, stands, on one side Saint John the Baptist, in his robe of camel's hair, pointing to our Lord; and, on the other, Saint Nicholas, with

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three little round bags, that look like balls, at his feet. But then, in the picture, he wears a mitre, and carries a crozier in one hand and a book in the other; like a bishop instead of a monk."

Our Nicholas was not only a monk but an abbot, and afterwards he was made Bishop of Myra. But my little friends have forgotten that whether abbot or bishop, there must be three well authenticated miracles in the true story of Nicholas of Myra, before he can have a place among the real saints, the canonized saints of the Church. There was nothing miraculous about the three bags of gold, beautiful as the action was, and beautiful as it looks, told in the picture painted by Fra Angelico of Fiesole; but there is one out of the many well authenticated miracles worked by our Nicholas of Myra, which proves him to have been one of the most powerful among the saints of God; worthy of the honor paid to him by the Church.

"Let us hear the miracle," call out the two voices.

And here it is, just as it has been written and told for fourteen hundred years: While Nicholas was the bishop of Myra, a terrible famine afflicted the country. During this famine, the holy bishop, full of compassion for his people, not only obtained a miraculous supply of bread for the crowds immediately before his eyes, but made visitations to every part of his vast diocese, that he might acquaint himself with the condition of all his people. On one of these visitations, he lodged in the house of a man into whom Satan seemed to have entered; for, when lawful meat failed for his table, he supplied it with the flesh of little children whom he stole, murdered in cold blood and served up, as meat from the shambles, to the travelers who were his guests. It was this horrible repast, disguised with his best skill, that this wicked man dared to set before the bishop and his companions. But no sooner had the man of God set his eyes upon this sumptuous table prepared for him,

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and upon the meat made savory to the nostrils of others, than he understood the horrible fraud. Commanding the host to be called into his presence, he charged him, then and there, with his abominable crime. Trembling in every limb, the guilty man confessed his sin, for how could he hope to hide it from such eyes? Then Nicholas told him to lead the way to the place where the remains of his victims had been hidden. They found them salted down in a tub, to the horror of all the beholders. But Nicholas, clothed with the majesty of a bishop of God, and endowed with that power which the Almighty One gives to his saints, no sooner made over them the sign of the cross, than life returned to these limbs and bodies, and three little children rose up on their knees in the tub, their small hands joined in an act of thanksgiving to God for their deliverance, and their faces beaming with a celestial joy! The holy bishop ordered these children to be restored to their mother, a poor widow, and thus the curse of God was removed from the house, and from the country where such crimes had been committed.

"No wonder we children love Saint Nicholas!" exclaim the two young voices. "We loved him, we did not know why, but now—" and the children ran for a picture of Saint Nicholas that had come, years before, among their Dusseldorf prints, where he stands in cope and mitre and crozier, carrying, on a book, two balls, and a third in his right hand, while he looks down benignly on three little children in a tub at his side, who seem to be singing a sweet canticle of praise, thanking God for their deliver ance by the hand of Saint Nicholas. The two voices declared Nicholas of Myra worthy of his halo, and of his title as a true saint of God; and when the 6th day of December, his feast-day, comes round, they will do something to honor Saint Nicholas even before his Christmas visit.

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SAINT AMBROSE.

A BEE! a bee!" shrieked dame Marcia, as she saw one flying across the court, filled with roses and orange trees in full bloom, to the cradle of the infant she had in charge.

"Not one bee, good Marcia, but a million!" said the stern voice of her master. "But keep silence; another scream may cost the child his life. Do not raise a finger," he continued, still more sternly, "or you will madden them!" And poor old Marcia, trembling in every limb, hid her face in her hands, that she might not see the beautiful babe stung to death before her eyes. As for her master, he had seen terrible deaths on the battle field, with a thousand times less horror than he felt when he saw this dark swarm settle down on the cradle of his infant son; and not only on the embroidered canopy which covered him but on the child himself; completely hiding the little face from his sight, crawling between the rosy lips, which were just parted as he slept under the lullaby of nurse Marcia; and acting as if they would gladly make there a nest for "honey in the honey-comb." His first feeling had been one of freezing horror; but as the moments

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went on and the infant made no cry, a strange awe crept over him, as if something above nature was taking place before his eyes. Prefect, as he was, of all Gaul and a part of Germany and Italy, in this year 340 after Christ, he was not only a Roman by birth and by an honorable ancestry, but he was a Christian Roman; and among all his ancestors who had served their native city in high places, he was proud of none as of Saint Soterus, who had nobly suffered martyrdom under Diocletian. The wife of Ambrose, this Roman prefect, was a Christian also and a Roman; and his two eldest children, Marcellina and Satyrus, had been born in Rome, and were little Christians in this far off city in France. Nurse Marcia was a Christian, and the atmosphere of his palace was altogether Christian. Therefore, when he had seen the swarm of bees settling down on his sleeping child, his heart had sent a prayer, swift as an arrow from the bow of one of his own archers, to that heaven from whence he knew all strength came, and all protection too. And when he saw the infant's sleep unbroken, and the bees crawling in and out of the fragrant mouth as if it were an open flower, or as if they would make it a hive for their honied sweets, he saw in it something more than a freak of nature in the bees, and stood watching them without a shadow of anxiety in his heart. Presently the whole swarm rose slowly from the cradle of the sleeping child, into the air; above the roses and the orange trees in bloom and above the tiled roof of the palace, and were lost to sight. And still the little Ambrose in the cradle, named as he was for his father, slept on; the bloom on his tender cheek unharmed and his lips parted in a smile.

When the prefect had bade nurse Marcia "keep silence nor dare to raise a finger," he had spoken low; but Marcia felt that his mood was stern, and that his voice was one of command; and she feared him even more than the bees. But now the voice was as gentle as a woman's, as he said: "Good Marcia, raise your

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eyes; the bees have flown and our darling is unharmed!" Then, as the infant opened his eyes, he took him reverently into his arms and an act of thanksgiving went up to God as he pressed his lips to the lips of the child; and he said aloud, in the fullness of his gratitude: "God must have a great destiny in store for this child, and therefore has he preserved him from a terrible death; and this mouth will drop words, sweet as honey in the honey-comb, for the honor of Christ and of his Church." The prefect died before the little Ambrose had learned to talk; but nurse Marcia did not allow the visit of the bees, nor the prediction of his father to be forgotten.

After the death of this good Christian parent, his wife returned to Rome with her three children, and lived in a house not far from the capitol. This house is still standing. It was here that the little Ambrose, seeing his mother and sister kiss the hand of a bishop, held out his own hand to them to kiss, saying: "I shall one day be a bishop." Still it was not for a priest that he was educated, but for public affairs and to follow the career of his father. He studied languages like the other noble youths of Rome; philosophy also and rhetoric. From his earliest years his tongue was most persuasive; and nurse Marcia always declared the bees left a drop of honey on his tongue before they took flight. While still young he won the favor of Symmachus, prince of the Roman senate, and of Anicius Probus, whom the emperor, Valentinian, had made the chief prefect of the Roman empire. "We have a prodigy of virtue and of eloquence," said Probus, "in this young Ambrose. With all his youth, and his brilliant talents, he has the discretion of an old senator. We cannot do better for Rome or for ourselves, than to take him as a counselor." But this dignity only led to another; for Probus seemed to delight in lavishing honors upon his young friend. By one order he was named governor of the provinces of Milan, of Turin, Genoa, Ravenna and Bologna. The modesty of Am-

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brose was put to the blush by such a promotion; but Probus was all the more pleased at this. When the young governor came to bid him farewell and to receive his last instructions, Probus, who had no relish for the severity usual with so many emperors and prefects, said to Ambrose: "Go; and rule less as a judge than as a bishop!" and this charge sounded afterwards like a prophecy.

Hardly had the new governor arrived in Milan when the whole city was stirred by the death of the bishop who had governed the Church at Milan for twenty years. During the greater part of this time he had favored the Arian heresy, and two parties had thus sprung up in Milan; viz., those who favored the Arians and wanted the new bishop to do so, and those who had been praying for a bishop after the mind of the Church. The emperor Valentinian had declared he would not interfere with the election; but in early ages, not only did the priests vote for a bishop but the people. Under these exciting circumstances they were disposed to use their right, and a tumult was the consequence. All this came to the ears of the governor; but instead of ordering out the military under his command or trying force of any sort, he went in person to the scene of disorder and took his place among the orators. No sooner was that voice heard, so persuasive in every one of its tones, than the crowd was stilled. Profiting by this, he went on to encourage them, by all the charms of his eloquence, to make a peaceable election. While he was yet speaking, and while every eye was upon him, a young child's voice was heard in the crowd, calling out, "Ambrose, bishop!" And as if this voice had come from heaven, as it certainly was an inspiration from heaven, the whole crowd took up the cry, and with one voice called out: "Ambrose, bishop!"

Nothing could exceed the confusion of the governor. Immediately he explained to them that he was there to assist them to elect, peaceably, some worthy ecclesiastic; while he was a mere layman, who had never taken the first step towards the priest-

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hood. But for once his eloquence seemed lost. They paid no heed to his explanation or expostulations, and filled with confusion he made his way through the crowd to his own apartments. "Whoever saw the like of these foolish Milanese?" he exclaimed to those around him; and he resolved to prove to them that he was not only unfit for a bishop but for a governor. But they were not to be thwarted. Only when night came did they cease to throng the street before his palace. At midnight he determined to end this strange affair by leaving the city, and rode diligently all night, as he supposed, towards Pavia. But the dawn found him before the Roman gate, not of Pavia but of Milan itself. He was recognized, surrounded as a prisoner, conducted back to his palace and put under guards. Having thus secured their prize, the Milanese wrote letters to Valentinian, the emperor and to Probus the governor, to use their authority in the matter. The emperor was very well pleased to hear that the man whom he had appointed for one of his prefects had been chosen by the people of his province as their bishop; and Probus was equally complacent, at having innocently predicted the whole affair when he charged him to rule "less as a judge than as a bishop." The emperor wrote immediately to Probus to use all diligence to make the election hold good; and Probus was only too willing to carry out the imperial order. In the meantime Ambrose had found a way to escape and withdraw secretly to the country house of a friend, named Leon. But Probus was not to be foiled; and he required any one who knew where Ambrose was concealed, to deliver him up, or be severely punished. Leon thought it was time for Ambrose to yield, and betrayed his secret. Once convinced that the election was according to the will of God and the mind of the Church, Ambrose not only submitted to receive holy orders, but applied himself most faithfully to learn his duties as a priest as well as a bishop. With what perfection did he perform the offices of acolythe, subdeacon, priest!

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How fervently was that first mass offered by the bishop-elect of the archdiocese of Milan, who had so lately worn the toga of the Roman governor! How perfect, too, was the renunciation of all worldly goods; for no sooner was he consecrated bishop than he gave all his gold and silver to the poor; to the Church in Milan all his estates, reserving only an annuity for his sister Marcellina. The temporalities of his diocese, or the care of its riches, he wished to put quite out of his mind, and called upon his brother Satyrus, to attend to all these worldly concerns; thus, from the first hour of his life as a bishop, the souls of his people were all in all to him. The poor, the imprisoned, widows, orphans, the unfortunate of every sort, won his time, his attention; so that while he preached, instructed, and won all hearts by the wonderful eloquence which belonged to him as a gift from heaven, his acts were even more persuasive than his words. His priests ripened into saints in the sunshine of his zeal, and their names still shine on the lists of the canonized servants of God. His sermons on the excellence of lives consecrated to God, won virgins for the convents of Milan from distant provinces; and his glowing exhortations on this holy state are still quoted to win young hearts from the service of the world to become spouses of Jesus Christ. He built churches and enriched them with relics; the relics of saints resting within the very walls of Milan. Under an inspiration from heaven he found the relics of the twin brothers, Gervasius and Protasius, and laid them, with all the pomp of rite and ceremony, under the altar of the church which now bears his name. Never had there been such beautiful days in Milan as under Ambrose. Never had Christianity put on such garments of loveliness. It was no longer the world which claimed all the honors and pleasures; no longer the world which could give happiness to its votaries. The whole city of Milan, nobles and people, rose up to fill the ranks of processions in honor of God and of his saints. No one was so honored by

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the emperor, Valentinian, who made his home in Milan, as Ambrose the bishop. A glory seemed to crown the city of Milan as well as the head of Ambrose.

It was during this season of holy prosperity, when penance sanctified the joy of the young, and when fast and abstinence and almsgiving sanctified the abundance of the rich, that a philosopher from Carthage made his way to Milan. The fame of this philosopher, who had not only taught rhetoric at Tagaste and Carthage, but had been crowned a poet in the theatre, by the pro-consul of Carthage, Vindicien, and who had been at Rome to find pupils more to his mind, had come before him to Milan; and with what interest did Ambrose watch the stranger who placed himself, day after day, at the foot of his pulpit to listen to him! This stranger had not caught the eye of Ambrose by his commanding figure or imposing air. On the contrary he was not above the middle height; very delicate, nervous and even frail. His skin was fine and transparent. His look was penetrating, but very sweet, and his eyes often filled with tears of sensibility and tenderness. His voice was feeble, and his eloquence was rather for a few chosen friends than for the multitude. Every thing about him declared him a person of the most perfect elegance, of the rarest distinction. After a few days Ambrose noticed hovering near the philosopher, like his very shadow, a small woman, nervous and delicate also, who seemed to pray rather than listen while he preached; and one day she called upon Ambrose, entreating him to pray for her son, the philosopher and poet from Carthage. By and by, the philosopher called too. At first he had listened to Ambrose because he had eloquence, just as he loved all beauty and all excellence. But as he listened, day by day, to those persuasive sentences, to those dogmas set forth so winningly by the tongue on which the bees had once settled, to which the Holy Ghost had lent inspiration, a blade of faith, like the first blade of wheat in spring, shot up

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in his soul. The mother's prayers had made fruitful the preaching of the great bishop of Milan. All the blindness of unbelief, all the errors of a poetic soul given up to the world, were to vanish before this two-fold force of prayer and of preaching. The months rolled on, and when Holy Saturday came in the year 387, Ambrose baptized Augustine, the philosopher and poet of Carthage, at the door of his new church in which lay the relics of Saints Gervasius and Protasius; his mother, Monica, looking on; and then, side by side, Ambrose and Augustine walked in glad procession, with priests and deacons and acolythes, to the high altar, singing the *Te Deum*, which Augustine called "The Ambrosian Hymn." And to-day, we know, that when Saint Ambrose won Saint Augustine to the Church, he won whole kingdoms and provinces and thousands of precious souls, to God.

But the triumphs of grace at the hands of Saint Ambrose did not pause even at Saint Augustine. In the year 390, while Saint Ambrose was holding a council at Milan, tidings reached him which almost froze the blood in the veins not only of Saint Ambrose, but of all the saintly prelates and priests who were sitting in council with him. By the order of Theodosius, the emperor, seven thousand persons had been put to the sword in the city of Thessalonica; and that in the most cruel manner; the innocent spared no more than those who might be supposed guilty! There was nothing which could excuse such a display of absolute power to Saint Ambrose. Theodosius had become, by this act, a sinner, who must do penance; and penance so far as possible, as public as his crime. He was no longer the emperor, the friend. As a culprit, only, did he stand before the mind of Ambrose the bishop, the pastor of the Christian flock in Milan. There was no quailing here before imperial majesty. Ambrose withdrew, indeed, from Milan for a few days, when the emperor was expected to return. But it was only to prepare himself, all

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the more solemnly, for the duty which he had to perform; and to give his righteous indignation time to calm, so that his speech should be all the more effectual whenever he should be compelled to reprove Theodosius. Nor was the opportunity long wanting. Theodosius did not venture into the presence of Saint Ambrose as a friend, according to his custom. But when the Sunday came, he repaired to the cathedral, now the church of Saint Ambrose, as usual. No sooner, however, was his approach announced to the bishop, than he went forth in his episcopal vestments to the great portal of the cathedral—the bronze doors of which swung on the very hinges they swing upon to-day—and meeting the emperor face to face, declared to him his crime, and that the doors of the church would be closed against him until he had done public penance, in the presence of his Christian subjects, for his great sin. For eight months did the emperor Theodosius, renouncing the honors of his office, join himself to the rank of the penitents; the chief of penitents as he had been chief in his offence. To find Theodosius, was to go to the church; and outside the door would be seen the august emperor of all the west, on his knees before the threshold which he did not presume to cross; often smiting his breast, even lying prostrate on the pavement, saying, in the bitterness of his soul: *My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: O Lord, restore my life according to thy word*, while tears streamed down his cheeks. And his people, so far from despising these penitent dispositions of the king, would kneel beside him, weeping, also, and joining their prayers to his with perfect simplicity. Yet, with all these signs of sincere contrition, Saint Ambrose would not give absolution to the emperor, until he had made a law to cancel all decrees made in haste or in anger, and to enforce a delay of thirty days in the execution of all sentences involving life or the forfeiture of estates; thus protecting the people from any excess of imperial resentment. Not one day during his life did Theodosius fail to weep

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for his great crime, committed in anger and under the influence of bad advisers; while, from that time forth, he was a model to princes and governors.

The pen of Saint Ambrose was hardly less eloquent than his tongue; but the time came when words, spoken or written, were to fail for Saint Ambrose. After having given one of the most brilliant examples of the power of God to instruct those whom he calls to his service and even to multiply their natural gifts, the signal for departure came to this great bishop. His studies continued even after he was sick. When in health, he wrote his books with his own hands; but we find him, at length, dictating to Paulinus, his scribe, his notes on the forty-third psalm, so far as the twenty-fifth verse. At the moment they came to this, *For our soul is humbled down to the dust*, Paulinus saw a flame, in the shape of a small shield, cover the head of his bishop, and, by degrees, creeping into his mouth, while his whole face became white as snow. In a short time the color returned to his cheeks, but he never dictated another sentence to Paulinus. One of the last acts of Saint Ambrose had been to ordain Saint Honoratus as bishop of Vercelli. On the last day of the life of Saint Ambrose, this same Honoratus had gone to his chamber to take a little rest, when a voice said to him, three times: "Arise, make haste, for he is going to depart." Rising instantly, he went down, taking with him the Body of the Lord, which Saint Ambrose had no sooner received and had swallowed, than his spirit returned to God. He died at midnight before Holy Saturday, the 4th of April 397, being about fifty-seven years old, and having been bishop twenty-two years and four months. To this day, Milan rejoices in the honors paid to Saint Ambrose. The bronze gates of the old church which bears his name are the tablets of her noblest history; and she places for a symbol at the side of her patron and bishop, a hive of bees, while the *Te Deum* is never

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sung, the world over, that it does not recall both Saint Ambrose and his neophyte, the philosopher of Carthage and afterwards bishop of Hippo, Saint Augustine.

The feast of Saint Ambrose is celebrated on the 7th day of December.



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